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THE SON AND HEIR

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THE ENGLISH

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THE SON AND HEIR

OR

THE ENGLISH

An Original Modern Comedy in Four Acts

By
GLADYS UNGER

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THE SON AND HEIR

An original Play in Four Acts by Gladys Unger, produced at the Strand Theatre, London, on February 1, 1913, with the following cast of characters :—

SIR EVERARD TITSY CHILWORTH, Bart., J.P.	.	.	.	Mr. Edmund Maurice.
EVERARD TITSY CHILWORTH, JUNR.	.	.	.	Mr. Max Leeds.
CECIL CHILWORTH	.	.	.	Mr. Bobbie Andrews.
PASCOE TANDRIDGE	.	.	.	Mr. Norman Trevor.
FELIX FOURIÉ	.	.	.	Mr. Raymond Laurette.
JOHN BROCK	.	.	.	Mr. J. Parish Robertson.
TIDDER (Butler)	.	.	.	Mr. Charles Daly.
WILLIAM (Footman)	.	.	.	Mr. Lambert Plummer.
LADY CHILWORTH	.	.	.	Miss Cynthia Brooke.
BEATRICE CHIL- WORTH WISHAW	} her daughters	.	.	Miss Ethel Irving.
AMY CHILWORTH		.	.	Miss Ethel Dane.
MISS CHILWORTH (SIR EVERARD'S sister)	.	.	.	Miss Jean Cadell.
DORMAN (LADY CHILWORTH'S maid)	.	.	.	Miss Mary Griffiths.

The Action takes place at "Ledgers," SIR EVERARD TITSY CHILWORTH'S country seat in Hertfordshire, early in January.

SCENERY

ACT I

SCENE. — *The Hall.*

Afternoon.

ACT II

SCENE. — *The Schoolroom.*

Evening.

ACT III

SCENE. — *BEATRICE WISHAW'S room.*

Night.

ACT IV

SCENE. — *The Breakfast-room.*

The next morning.

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THE SON AND HEIR

ACT I

SCENE.—*The Hall at "Ledgers," a commodious Jacobean Manor House, restored in the Georgian era, and now fitted with electric light and modern comforts.*

The hall is mostly furnished in Jacobean oak. No striving for the artistic—the aspect merely of a well-ordered home that has been "lived in" for generations.

The scene affords a glimpse of the vestibule and front door of the house. The vestibule floor is tiled. The hall flooring is parquet, strewn with rugs. The vestibule is separated from the hall by pillars. In the hall at back, a large window, with seat, overlooks the carriage drive and a corner of the park. There are no curtains to this window, which is leaded. At rise one of the windows is on the latch. On the R. of window seat upper door R. leads to an inner hall. Below it, R., an enormous Jacobean fireplace, with a tall oak settle at the upper end and an oak chair at the lower. On the open hearth a log fire is burning. Below mantel lower door leads to the main staircase. C. of hall a gate-legged table oak. Higher up, against the partition that separates the hall from the vestibule is a table with a post-box, time tables, etc. Scattered about are some straight-backed Stuart oak chairs. In the vestibule, an oak chest. There are no pictures at all, save one, and that is conspicuously placed over

the mantelpiece. It is a portrait of a young man on a hunter.

(*Discovered at Rise* :—LADY CHILWORTH, AMY CHILWORTH, and MISS CHILWORTH. LADY CHILWORTH is a long-limbed, statuesque, clear-cut woman of forty-five, who has been a great beauty and is still very handsome. Her manner is intensely reserved; she appears to be cold and absent-minded. Her daughter AMY is a sweet delicate-looking girl of twenty-five, pretty and wistful and a trifle prim. MISS AGATHA CHILWORTH is an embittered old maid of sixty, with an ingratiating manner and a grim determination to make herself indispensable in a cold world.)

(*At rise the three women are sitting around the fire, LADY CHILWORTH on the settee above mantel, AMY on chair below mantel and MISS CHILWORTH next to LADY CHILWORTH. All three are embroidering tea-cloths on round wooden frames. They are not talking—they have nothing to say to each other. A dog is heard whining and scratching at the outer door.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Amy!

AMY (*looking up*). Yes, mother?

LADY CHILWORTH. One of the dogs is scratching at the door. Send it away.

AMY (*rising, crosses c.*). But suppose it's one of Everard's beagles—may I let it in? (*Goes up c., puts work on table.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Even so, your father doesn't like the dogs indoors.

AMY (*crosses to table c.*). I'll take it back to the kennels.

MISS CHILWORTH (*who has risen, crosses above table*). Oh, let me do that for you, Amy dear.

AMY (*R. of table*). You don't know where the kennels are, Aunt Agatha.

MISS CHILWORTH (*smiling sarcastically*). Don't I?

You forget I lived here, Amy, before my poor dear father died.

AMY. Oh, but it's all been changed since *then*.
(*Going up L.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (c. *bitterly*). I know it's a long time ago.

AMY (*pausing at entrance to vestibule*). I didn't mean that, Aunt Agatha, but the kennels were moved when the garage for Everard's motor was built last spring. (*Puts on a coat that is on settle in vestibule.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. Oh! (*With emphasis.*) Indeed? I couldn't be expected to know that, as I'm only asked to "Ledgers" once a year.

LADY CHILWORTH (*quietly*). The dog is scratching again, Amy.

(AMY goes up.)

AMY (*opening front door*). Poor old Jack! (*Stooping to take it by collar.*) Back you go. You know you're not allowed in here, old boy.

(*She disappears, leaving front door wide open. In a second she is seen through the window passing from L. to R. on her way to the kennels.*)

(MISS CHILWORTH resumes her seat and her work. She opens her mouth once or twice to chat to her sister-in-law, but thinks better of it. There is a silence. Door R.U. opens. Enter WILLIAM the footman.)

WILLIAM (*coming to LADY CHILWORTH*). The run-rack has just come, m'lady.

LADY CHILWORTH. What gunrack?

WILLIAM. Mr. Everard's, m'lady. Will you say where it's to go?

LADY CHILWORTH. I'll come at once.

(Exit WILLIAM door R.U.)

MISS CHILWORTH (*rising*). Let me do it for you, my dear Mary.

LADY CHILWORTH (*rises, putting down her work*).
No, no, thank you.

MISS CHILWORTH. Your guests may arrive at any moment. Oughtn't you to be here?

LADY CHILWORTH (*going*). Everard will be annoyed if the gunrack isn't placed as he wishes. I must see to it myself.

(*She goes out hastily R. lower entrance.*)

(MISS CHILWORTH *alone, bridles, then resumes her seat. Enter door R.U. DORMAN, a plump, middle-aged, respectable, sleek lady's maid. She looks for LADY CHILWORTH, and seeing she is not in the hall, starts to go out.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*patronizingly*). Ah, Dorman, what is it?

DORMAN (*by settee*). Thank you, Miss. I wanted her ladyship. (*Going.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. Won't I do? (*Goes to her.*)

DORMAN. No, miss, I wanted to know something.

MISS CHILWORTH. Well, I'll tell you. Are you in some difficulty?

DORMAN (*grudgingly*). It's about Mister Everard's things that I have to mend.

MISS CHILWORTH (*rising, important*). I'll go with you and see to them at once. (*Up R.*)

DORMAN (*protesting*). Mister Everard is so very particular, miss, about his silk socks and what not——

MISS CHILWORTH (*triumphant at finding something to manage*). Just show them to me, my good Dorman, and I'll put you right.

DORMAN. But——

(PASCOE and FELIX are seen crossing)

(MISS CHILWORTH and DORMAN go out together door R.U.E.)

(*For a second the stage is empty. Then two young men walk in the open front door. They are PASCOE*

TANDRIDGE and FELIX FOURIÉ. PASCOE is a handsome Englishman of thirty-five—not the athletic type—but the lettered dilettante, who has travelled more for knowledge than for the shooting. FELIX FOURIÉ is a typical modern young Parisian, who might be taken on sight for an Englishman—his clothes are almost aggressively British. But his airy self-complacent manner, his volubility and his quick movements betray him. He speaks English without accent, but far more rapidly than an Englishman, and he interpolates the slang he has picked up with great gusto. PASCOE strides in through vestibule the first.)

PASCOE (looking around). Hum! No one about. (R. of settee.)

FELIX (following him into hall). Are we there, Pascoe? (Coming down L.)

PASCOE. We are, Felix.

FELIX. My word! What a walk! (Sits chair at bureau L.)

PASCOE. That was nothing. It's only two miles from the station by the short cut we took.

FELIX. Two? (Takes gloves off.) It is six! My legs say it is six. I would have taken the carriage sent to meet us if my legs had known sooner.

PASCOE. I was determined to get your circulation up. You've done nothing but complain of the cold since you arrived from Paris yesterday.

FELIX. Pouff! (Rises.) I am too hot now. (Goes up.)

PASCOE (going up L.). You won't be for long. (BUS. with coat.)

FELIX. Rather not. (Takes his coat off.) For the first thing English people do when they come into a draughty room on a cold day is to say "By Jove, how hot!" and open another window. (Puts coat down.)

PASCOE (*taking off his coat at table*). Then let's make ourselves comfortable before any one turns up. (*Puts coat down.*)

FELIX. Why is our hostess not here to receive us? (*Crosses down L.*)

PASCOE (*carelessly, crosses to fireplace*). Don't know. The Chilworths never stand on ceremony with me. Sir Everard and father were up at Oxford together, you know.

FELIX. Ah, yes. (*Crosses to c.*) And with you English it is the rule that the longer you know people the ruder you can be.

PASCOE. Not ruder—merely more natural. (*Turns to fire.*)

FELIX. The same thing! Oh, I do not criticise! (*Crosses to PASCOE.*) I observe! I delight. You know how I love England! There is such charm in a country where the upper classes never apologise and the lower classes beg pardon for nothing.

PASCOE (*chaffing*). My dear Felix, you really must write your impressions of England. I feel that they would be—er—priceless.

FELIX (*taking him seriously*). That is what I am about, old chap. And be sure I will do your nation justice, not only because England is now "The Rage" in France, but because of your unspeakable kindness to me.

PASCOE. My what? (*Standing by fire.*)

FELIX (*genuinely moved, putting his hand on PASCOE'S shoulder*). Old chap, you have taken me out of what you call a "big hole."

PASCOE (*surprised*). Have I? Good! But tell me how?

FELIX (*reluctantly*). You really wish to know?

PASCOE. Of course. Your unusual reticence has thoroughly roused my curiosity. What's up? The mere determination to write a book on England doesn't explain your mad haste. Why this secret, sudden longing to explore a British home?

FELIX (*nervng himself*). Well, I will tell you, as man to man under the rose.

(PASCOE *sits chair by fire.*)

(*With a burst of fluency.*) It was like this. A powerful French editor comes to me and says "Felix, my boy, I am bringing out a series of articles on Great Britain. You are the writer to help me. You were once at an English school, you speak their slang, you like their tailors, you know how to box, you read Lord Byron. I will therefore give you the branch of 'English Family Life.'"

PASCOE. Very complimentary and confiding of the powerful French editor.

FELIX. Unfortunately this happens in Maman's drawing-room.

(*Starts to check stage lights also outside.*)

PASCOE. Didn't that splendid "Madame Mère" of yours want you to write the articles?

FELIX. Naturally! They are well paid. Only—alas—Maman exclaims to the powerful editor, "Oh, Felix will turn those out quickly. *He has lived so much in England.*" (*Groans; goes up to settee.*)

PASCOE. But you haven't.

FELIX. No. (*Sits settee.*) I deceived Maman to get away from home. (*Sits.*)

PASCOE. Ah; this comes of reading Byron. (*Rises, crosses L.*)

FELIX. No. It began before I had read him. A little work girl. She is ripping. She adores me.

PASCOE. The immortal little French milliner?

FELIX. No. She is cashier in a factory in Lille. As I love her truly it would worry Maman. So out of respect for Maman, I lied to her.

PASCOE. How did you account for your absences?

FELIX. I said I was having a love affair at Dover with an English married woman.

PASCOE. Great Scott! (*Goes up to overcoat for handkerchief.*)

FELIX. Maman was pleased. She thought it so good for my pronunciation.

PASCOE. Well, Fate has avenged my countrywomen. (*Comes out of vestibule.*)

FELIX. Yes. (*Rises and crosses to PASCOE.*) For now I must what you call "cram" my knowledge of English family life.

PASCOE. And I've got to be your crammer, eh, you desperate French dog you! Well, you had better luck than you deserve when I chose "Ledgers" for your first visit. The Chilworths are thoroughly typical.

FELIX. One moment. (*Going up.*) It is too warm on one side of this room. But by Jove! it is too cold on the other. (*He closes window.*) What was that you said about the Chilworths? (*Joins PASCOE.*)

PASCOE. They're a typical county family—a little clan apart (*Comes down and sits settee L. of table.*)—a tribe by themselves—as much as if they were Bedouins in the desert. Their relations with the outside world are but so many truces. They parley but never mingle. They go to Court, but they're not Court circle. They hunt, but they don't belong to the hunting set. They never quite leave the shade of their own family tree.

FELIX. Ah, they are an old nobility? (*Sits R. of table.*)

PASCOE. No. The baronetcy only dates from seventeen something.

FELIX. A respectable age. And if the title was bestowed for some great service to the country—for valour on the battlefield——

PASCOE. It was bestowed for the invention of a hair powder that suited a florid lady friend of George the Second's. The first Baronet was a hairdresser named Titsy.

FELIX. Ah! A profession admitting of great possibilities.

PASCOE. True, for he eloped with an heiress of the old English family of Chilworth.

FELIX. And are the Chilworths rich?

PASCOE. Not very. They've thought less of money than of the race. They generally marry into healthy stock.

FELIX. To marry for health! (*Rise, cross to c.*) How cold-blooded! Then a Chilworth only holds his fiancée's hand to count her pulse and before he kisses her he says, "Kindly put out your tongue, Miss." Eh, what?

PASCOE (*rises, crosses c. to FELIX*). Yes, and before a Fourié marries he counts his fiancée's money and says, "Kindly put down your securities, Mademoiselle." Eh, what?

FELIX (*smiling pensively*). Oh, I shall not worry about those sordid details. (*Pause.*) Maman will see to them.

(*Enter LADY CHILWORTH R. lower entrance.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh! You here, Pascoe? (*Crosses to PASCOE.*)

PASCOE (*going to her*). How do you do, Lady Chilworth?

LADY CHILWORTH (*shaking hands with him briefly*). How are you?

PASCOE. Very fit, thanks. Let me introduce my friend Monsieur Fourié, Lady Chilworth.

LADY CHILWORTH (*giving FELIX a limp hand*). How do you do?

LADY CHILWORTH.

FOURIÉ.

PASCOE.

FELIX. Enchanted to make your acquaintance, my dear Lady Chilworth. (*Kisses her hand.*)

(*She draws it back quickly.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. It seems very warm in here. Will you open a window, Pascoe?

PASCOE (*looking at FELIX, maliciously*). With pleasure. (*He goes up and opens window at back.*)

FELIX. It was jolly of you, Lady Chilworth, to let me visit you so unexpectedly.

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, I didn't. It was Sir Everard. He did not tell me you were coming until this morning. (*Goes to settee.*)

FELIX (*pained*). Have I inconvenienced you?

LADY CHILWORTH (*murmuring*). Not at all. (*Sits settee.*)

FELIX. I would never forgive myself. I have heard such ripping things of you. (*By L. of settee.*)

LADY CHILWORTH (*mildly astonished*). Have you? Won't you sit down? (*She takes up her work.*)

(PASCOE comes down and watches FELIX with quiet enjoyment.)

FELIX (*sits settee beside her*). The fame of your ladyship's beauty is wide spread.

LADY CHILWORTH (*incredulously*). My beauty?

FELIX. You seem surprised.

(PASCOE comes C., sits chair R. of table.)

LADY CHILWORTH. It's so long since I heard it mentioned.

FELIX (*rises*). You should come to France.

LADY CHILWORTH. What for?

FELIX. To hear (*getting nearer to her*) the things a woman should never be long without hearing.

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, you forget—I have grown-up children.

(PASCOE sits R. of table.)

FELIX. I should always forget that in your ladyship's presence.

(*Enter door R.U. TIDDER, an elderly butler.*)

LADY CHILWORTH (*embarrassed*). I wonder where Amy is.

TIDDER (*coming straight to PASCOE*). Your luggage has come from the station, sir. Could you oblige me with your key? (*Presents salver.*)

PASCOE. There it is. (*Gives him key.*)

TIDDER. Thank you, sir.

PASCOE (*shakes hands.*). How are you, Tidder?

TIDDER. Very pleased to see you back, Mr. Tandridge, sir. (*He bows and goes to FELIX with the salver.*)

PASCOE. Give Tidder your key, Felix, and he'll unpack your things.

FELIX (*rises, feeling feverishly in his pockets*). My key—my key. (*Remembering.*) Ah! The key of my large bag is in my small bag and the key of my small bag is lost. (*Sits.*)

TIDDER. Thank you, sir.

(*Exit door R.U.*)

FELIX (*quickly resuming the conquest of LADY CHILWORTH*). Do you come to London often?

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh no, never.

PASCOE (*surprised*). Why, you used to spend a few weeks in town every season, Lady Chilworth.

LADY CHILWORTH. We've had to give them up now that Everard is at Oxford.

FELIX. And Paris?

LADY CHILWORTH. I was there once when I was a girl. I didn't care for it.

FELIX. You did not care for Paris? Yet you are "smart!" (*He looks appreciatively at her gown.*)

LADY CHILWORTH (*flushing with pleasure*). This came from Angeliue.

FELIX (*triumphantly; turns to PASCOE*). Ah! A Frenchwoman!

LADY CHILWORTH. No. English. I was careful to inquire. Sir Everard doesn't like French fashions.

FELIX (*turns to* LADY CHILWORTH). Yet he approves of this gown?

LADY CHILWORTH (*wondering*). I suppose he must. He never said he didn't.

FELIX (*faces* PASCOE, *then turns to* LADY CHILWORTH). Then he tolerates the devil unawares. (*Indicating dress, authoritatively.*) It is a Callot model.

LADY CHILWORTH (*alarmed at his uncanny knowledge*). Oh! I must speak to Angelique severely about it.

(*Enter* MISS CHILWORTH *lower door R.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*crosses to* PASCOE). Ah! So you've arrived, Pascoe?"

(PASCOE *rises and shakes hands with her.*)

I haven't seen you for a long time. (*Significantly.*) I'm so seldom at "Ledgers." And this, I can see, is your French friend——

(FELIX *comes down to* MISS CHILWORTH.)

PASCOE. Let me introduce you. Monsieur Fourié, Miss Chilworth.

FELIX. Enchanted to meet you, Miss Chilworth.

MISS CHILWORTH. Ah! How nice and French that sounds. Yours is such an expressive language, isn't it?

FELIX. Quite so, Miss Chilworth, but I thought I was speaking English.

MISS CHILWORTH (*meaning to flatter him*). So you were. But any one could tell you were foreign by that fascinating little accent.

(FELIX *very annoyed*. MISS CHILWORTH *crosses to* LADY CHILWORTH. PASCOE *joins* FELIX *and they go up to window.*)

(*To the latter, half confidentially.*) I've just been helping Dorman out of a difficulty.

LADY CHILWORTH (*looking up inquiringly*). Oh!

MISS CHILWORTH. Some things of Everard's.

LADY CHILWORTH. Everard's? (*Rising hastily.*)
I must see what you've been doing. (*Puts her work down, goes down R.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*aggrieved, rises*). I meant to save you the trouble.

LADY CHILWORTH (*going R.*) Everard is so particular. If he's put out he'll complain to his father and——

(*Exit by door, lower door R.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*following her off*). But, my dear Mary, I told Dorman exactly what to do! and——

(*Exit.*)

(*FELIX and PASCOE come down C.*)

FELIX. Ah! Who is the elderly lady who makes herself too useful?

PASCOE (*crosses to fireplace*). Sir Edward's sister.

FELIX (*by fire*). She enrages her sister-in-law. But then, so do you, old chap.

PASCOE (*surprised*). Why, what makes you think Lady Chilworth is angry with me?

FELIX. You are an old family friend. Your father was up at Oxford—the butler is pleased to see you. Yet when you arrive there is no warmth, no cordial greeting, no affection displayed. All she says is, "You come, Pascoe?"

PASCOE. Bless me, that's not a sign of anger! That merely shows on what good terms we are.

(*Warn lights.*)

FELIX. By Jove! (*Goes C.*) What the deuce would it be if she loved you? Then she would not speak to you at all, eh, what?

PASCOE. I suppose we don't waste much time on what you call "the formulas of politeness."

FELIX (C.). In fact, you are what you call "damned casual."

PASCOE. As bad as that? (*Sits R. settee.*)

FELIX (*goes to L. of settee*). Why, in France our host and hostess would meet us at the station. Or if, by some terrible accident, they were prevented, our hostess would rush in all excuses. Having kissed you on both cheeks she would explain in detail how the deplorable breach of courtesy happened; she would then inquire after our healths and our esteemed mothers' healths. And by this time, the lady being out of breath, it would be for us to describe in detail the accidents and adventures of our railway journey from town. (*Takes a step backwards towards C.*)

PASCOE. Now I know why the French travel so little.

(AMY CHILWORTH *is seen through window passing outside from R. to L.*)

FELIX (*turns to window*). Ah! Look! A young woman! Not bad at all. Who is she?

PASCOE. It's Amy Chilworth—the younger daughter.

FELIX. Where is the other one? (*Coming down a little.*)

PASCOE (*stops by chair at head of table C.*) Oh, she's married. (*Crosses L.*)

(AMY *comes in the front door, closes it behind her, and comes through vestibule into hall.*)

AMY (*stepping in*). Oh, you here, Pascoe? (*Puts coat down.*)

(FELIX *gives a little squeak at the familiar greeting.*
AMY *looks at him surprised.*)

(*Enter WILLIAM door R.U. He turns the lights on.*)

PASCOE (*shaking hands with AMY*). How are you, Amy?

(*Lights.*)

AMY (*putting back her hair*). Very untidy. I've been down to the kennels.

(FELIX *plucks PASCOE'S sleeve.*)

PASCOE (*introducing*). This is my friend Felix Fourié—Miss Amy Chilworth.

AMY (*giving FELIX her hand*). How do you do?

FELIX. Oh, you here, Miss Chilworth? Beastly hot, what?

AMY (*opening her eyes*). I beg your pardon?
(*Takes her coat off.*)

(*Gong.*)

PASCOE. You mustn't mind Felix's little colloquialisms, Amy. He's only just got beyond "the pen of the milkman is in the hat of the gardener's aunt." (*Takes her coat and goes up and puts it on settle in vestibule.*)

(WILLIAM *has gone out upper door R. to ring the gong for tea. As it dies away, enter JOHN BROCK arch C. lower door R. He is a well set-up, earnest-looking young man.*)

PASCOE (*starting forward*). Why, if it isn't John Brock!

BROCK (*crossing to PASCOE L.*) Tandridge!

(*They shake hands cordially.*)

PASCOE. I had no idea you were at "Ledgers," Brock. I heard you were schoolmastering.

AMY (*looking at BROCK with an unconscious look of proprietorship*). So he is—in a poky preparatory school at Eastbourne. (*Coming down.*)

PASCOE (*to BROCK*). How about your archæological work?

BROCK. Oh, I hope to be able to take it up again later on. It's not very lucrative, you know.

AMY (*in an awe-struck voice*). He's just published a wonderful monograph on Greek vases in the *Hellenic Magazine*.

BROCK (*shaking his head at AMY*). Don't believe Miss Chilworth, Tandridge. She exaggerates. (*Cross with PASCOE by bureau.*)

PASCOE. I shall look it up. On holiday, now?

(AMY *talks to* FELIX.)

BROCK. I'm here coaching Everard.

(WILLIAM *has re-entered door U.R., followed by* TIDDER *with tea-urn, which he places on table C.* WILLIAM *brings stand with bread and butter, cakes, etc.* Re-enter MISS CHILWORTH *lower door R.*)

PASCOE. Oh! That's no holiday. (*To* FELIX.) This is an old chum of mine. We were at New College together.

FELIX. Ah! (*Cross to* BROCK.) How very interesting. And was he your fag at College?

MISS CHILWORTH (*making straight for the tea-table, to* FELIX). My sister-in-law has been called to the telephone, so I will pour the tea. (*Sits behind urn.*)

(AMY *goes up to* MISS CHILWORTH. BROCK *sits at bureau L. against wall and writes a letter.*)

(*Exeunt* WILLIAM and TIDDER U.R.)

FELIX (*rubbing his hands*). Ah! Tea! (*Up a little L. of table.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*pouring tea*). I thought French people didn't care for it.

(AMY *standing.*)

FELIX. Oh, believe me, we are awfully civilized now. (*Gives AMY cup.*)

(AMY takes cup to PASCOE and then takes cake stand from TIDDER.)

PASCOE (*crosses to AMY*). Where are Sir Everard and the boys?

MISS CHILWORTH. They're hunting. They generally get back for tea.

AMY. It's Cecil's first day with the hounds. (*Crosses with tea to PASCOE, c.*)

PASCOE. Really? Good boy! (*Crosses to fireplace, sits settee.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. For you, Monsieur Fourié. (*Gives FELIX tea.*) Let's hope the dear lad does nicely.

(Enter LADY CHILWORTH lower door R. crosses to tea table.)

LADY CHILWORTH. Agatha!

(FELIX comes to chair and sits.)

MISS CHILWORTH (*looking up in surprise*). Oh! Hadn't I better go on? (*Rises.*)

LADY CHILWORTH (*firmly*). Please don't trouble.

(MISS CHILWORTH resigns her place reluctantly.)

Monsieur Fourié, will you have some cake?

(AMY offers cake to FELIX.)

(Sitting behind urn.) Who do you think we're expecting, Pascoe?

PASCOE. I can't guess, (*rises*), Lady Chilworth.

(AMY crosses to chair by LADY CHILWORTH.)

LADY CHILWORTH. Beatrice!

PASCOE (*c.*). Beatrice!

AMY. We see Bee so seldom nowadays. (*Crosses to settee with cake, FELIX takes cake.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. She only sent word she was coming yesterday—(*sits R. of table*) quite suddenly—about the time you did, Pascoe.

PASCOE. Indeed!

(AMY crosses to BROCK.)

LADY CHILWORTH. She's just telephoned that a puncture has delayed her.

PASCOE. Then she's motoring from her husband's place—what's the name of it?

MISS CHILWORTH. Bellingham Park. I've never been there. But surely they've invited you?

(AMY crosses to LADY CHILWORTH.)

PASCOE. I think they did, about four years ago—soon after Beatrice was married. But something kept me from going. (*Sits settee.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Mr. Brock. (*Hands cup to AMY.*)

(FELIX *hands cup to* MISS CHILWORTH.)

AMY (*who has been standing at her mother's elbow*). Mother, you've given Mr. Brock two lumps of sugar. He doesn't take any at all.

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, sorry. (*She changes the cup.*)

BROCK (*rises from bureau*). Oh, that's all right. (*Meets AMY; takes cup*). Thanks, Miss Chilworth.

(*Enter door R.U. CECIL CHILWORTH, a fine lad of twelve in a brown riding suit.*)

CECIL (*flushed and excited*). Oh, I say, what do you think? (C.).

LADY CHILWORTH. Take off your cap, Cecil, lower your voice and speak to Pascoe Tandrige and his friend.

(AMY crosses to PASCOE and sits settee by fire.)

CECIL (*by* LADY CHILWORTH. *Dampened*). Yes,

mother. (*He takes off his cap and comes quickly down to FELIX, then PASCOE.*) How do you do? How do you do?

PASCOE (*rises; shaking the boy's hand*). Hello, Cecil, what's this I hear? Your first day with the hounds? What luck!

CECIL (*bursting forth*). Rotten. There's been an accident. (*Comes c.*)

LADY CHILWORTH and AMY (*both deeply alarmed but not betraying it*). An accident?

LADY CHILWORTH (*petrified in her chair*). Not—not your father?

CECIL. Oh, no!

LADY CHILWORTH. Or Everard?

CECIL. He's all right. But it was his fault. He made me get down and open a gate for him. It was then that—that my pony kicked his mare.

LADY CHILWORTH (*rising quickly*). The mare's hurt?

AMY (*rises*). The mare? (*Comes c.*)

CECIL. It was all we could do to get her home. Everard took my pony and I had to walk.

LADY CHILWORTH. Your father will be furious. (*Sits.*)

(AMY sits on settee by PASCOE.)

CECIL. He is—he's in the stable with Everard and the mare. (*As door R.U. opens.*) Oh, here he is.

(*Goes up to table by window, puts hat and gloves down.*)

(*Enter SIR EVERARD CHILWORTH in pink. He is a handsome, well set-up Englishman of the country squire type, with thick grey hair and a fresh colouring. He's fifty but doesn't look it. He feels that to be cordial and cheery is somehow the duty of an English host, so he assumes a hearty manner that does not always ring quite true. In reality he's an austere, unimaginative man with an iron will and a bad temper.*)

SIR EVERARD (*comes down*). Oh, you here, Tandrige? (*Shakes hands*.) Brought your French friend? That's right. (*Crosses L.*) Very glad to welcome you, Monsieur Fourié.

(FELIX rises; SIR EVERARD *shakes hands with* FELIX.)

FELIX. You are too kind, Sir Everard.

SIR EVERARD. Not at all!

(FELIX *sits*.)

Had your tea? That's right (*Cross to PASCOE—slapping PASCOE on the shoulder*.) How are you, my boy? (*Without waiting for an answer*.) Have you heard the mess this young cub landed us in?

(*Points with his crop to CECIL, who stands shifting from one foot to another by cake stand below table C.*)

CECIL (*murmuring*). It wasn't my fault.

SIR EVERARD. Don't argue with me.

CECIL. But I thought— (*Crosses to SIR EVERARD*.)

SIR EVERARD. You have no right to think.

CECIL (*gulping*). Everard shouldn't have made me get down on my first day out.

SIR EVERARD. First day or fiftieth day Everard has a perfect right to make you get down. Isn't he your elder brother?

CECIL. It wasn't my fault.

SIR EVERARD (*keeping his temper with difficulty*). You had no business to leave your pony so close to the mare. Don't contradict me again.

(AMY *crosses to* LADY CHILWORTH.)

CECIL (*obstinately*). It wasn't my fault.

SIR EVERARD (*quietly, turns him round*). That'll do. We'll continue this conversation at seven o'clock in my study. Do you hear?

CECIL (*coolly*). Yes, sir. (*With bravado*). Can I have some tea, mother?

(*Takes cake, crosses L., goes round settee and meets AMY at head of it. SIR EVERARD puts his crop on window seat—also gloves. Enter door R.U. EVERARD CHILWORTH also in pink. He is a weedy, dissipated-looking youth of twenty, snappy and spoilt.*)

SIR EVERARD (*turning, his face lighting up at mere sight of his eldest son*). Well, Everard?

EVERARD. No go. Tidder telephoned the vet, but the fool was out.

SIR EVERARD. Did you leave a message for him to come at once?

EVERARD. Of course. Give me some tea, mother. (*Comes C.*) Hello, Tandridge (*shakes hands*), this is a nice beginning for your visit, ain't it? Goin' to stay long?

PASCOE. No. I must get back to town to-morrow. But your father has taken my friend Fourié in for longer. (*Cross to table.*)

EVERARD (*crosses to FELIX R., giving him a hand*). How d'ye do?

FELIX (*rises*). I much deplore this rotten accident to your fine horse.

(PASCOE *crosses with cup to table then joins SIR EVERARD. MISS CHILWORTH brings tea to EVERARD C. then sits L. of settee.*)

EVERARD (*taking tea MISS CHILWORTH brings him*). Hard lines on a fellow, isn't it?

AMY. Cake, Everard?

EVERARD (*to AMY*). No thanks. What would you do in France with a young brother like that? (*Drinks tea.*)

FELIX. Oh, we would never ask him to open our gates again. (*Sits settee L.*)

EVERARD (*putting down tea cup*). Poisonous stuff ! Must have been standing a year.

LADY CHILWORTH (*distressed, rises, crosses to bell L. then sits on settle*). I'm very sorry, Everard. I'll ring for some fresh at once.

EVERARD (*sarcastically; goes R.*). Oh, don't trouble about me. I'm going back to the stable, anyhow.

BROCK (*rising, coming to EVERARD*). I wanted you to do some work before dinner.

EVERARD (C.). Out of the question, Brock. Do I look in a mood for work ?

BROCK. We ought to get through some Cæsar to-day.

SIR EVERARD (*coming down; quite kindly*). My dear Brock, don't you see the boy's got something on his mind ? You can't expect him to tackle Cæsar before he's seen the vet.

BROCK (*with tightened lips*). Very well, sir.

(*Exits by door, lower door R. looking down.*)

SIR EVERARD (*to FELIX*). A good honest fellow that, but no tact—no tact. (*Crosses to EVERARD.*)

FELIX. Ah, tact is seldom a gift of scholars. (*Crosses with basket.*)

EVERARD (*at fireplace, takes cigarette*). I suppose it's something one can't expect in a poor devil of a crammer.

AMY (*by writing desk*). Everard.

PASCOE (*easily, without any appearance of reproof; as if it was all for FELIX's benefit*). Brock's a type of Englishman we ought to be proud of. Not a soul in the world to help him as a boy. Worked his way through College on scholarships. Any amount of grit. I admire him immensely.

(AMY *looks at him gratefully.*)

EVERARD (*by mantelpiece*). These are rotten cigarettes.

LADY CHILWORTH (*to MISS CHILWORTH*). Have you any scissors?

MISS CHILWORTH. No.

LADY CHILWORTH. Amy!

(AMY crosses R. to table, gets scissors then comes down to settle by fire.)

(Enter TIDDER and WILLIAM upper door R. for the tea things. CECIL reserves several plates of cakes and his cup and carrying them into a corner makes a copious tea.)

EVERARD. Oh, Tidder, bring me a whisky and soda in the stable.

TIDDER. Very good, sir.

SIR EVERARD (*to EVERARD*). Oh, are you going?
(Comes down.)

EVERARD. Yes, I want to see how she's gettin' on.

(Exit.)

MISS CHILWORTH. Dear boy, how he loves animals!

(The two servants carry the tea things out door R.U.)

LADY CHILWORTH, MISS CHILWORTH and AMY (*who turns up light on table up C. and sits on window seat*) resume their various embroideries. LADY CHILWORTH crosses to CECIL. PASCOE goes and sits settee L. of table.)

FELIX (*rises; taking out his cigarette case*). Is one permitted to smoke here? (Comes C.)

MISS CHILWORTH. Oh yes, we're very liberal here. You may smoke all over the house—except in the bedrooms, and dining-room and drawing-room and the morning-room and the library.

SIR EVERARD (*with a resentful glance at MISS CHILWORTH*). My sister leaves us the hall, Fourié. (*Offering his own case.*) Here, have one of mine. You'll find the matches there.

(FELIX crosses to fireplace.)

(Offering case to PASCOE.) It's a long time since we had you down, Pascoe. (Sits R. of table.)

PASCOE. I work too hard to get away much these days, Sir Everard.

SIR EVERARD (sits R. of table). Ah, you're making money. How surprised your father would have been.

PASCOE. Dear old Dad!

SIR EVERARD. I bought one of your books. Didn't it have a green paper cover with a dragon on it?

PASCOE. That was the cheap edition.

FELIX (by fireplace). A real work of art! It was actually reviewed in Paris. People said "Here is an Englishman who writes almost as well as if he were French!"

SIR EVERARD. I'm bound to say I enjoyed it. Though I don't suppose I should ever have read it if I hadn't rowed in the same boat with Pascoe's father.

(FELIX crosses C.)

Of course I had to forbid my young people to read it.

FELIX. Naturally. (Crosses to chair R. of table.) Pascoe's opinions are not for girls and boys.

SIR EVERARD. Ah, I'm glad to hear you say that, Monsieur Fourié.

FELIX. Do you remember that wonderful passage where the courtesan goes down on her knees and——

SIR EVERARD (turning quickly to look for CECIL). Oh, Cecil, go and see if the vet's come yet.

CECIL (rising and putting down cake). Yes, father.

(Exit door L.R.)

SIR EVERARD (to FELIX). Excuse me for interrupting you.

FELIX (*resuming with serene unconsciousness*). That passage where the courtesan——

LADY CHILWORTH (*looking up*). Amy, go and tell Dorman I'm coming up to rest before dinner...

AMY (*rising and taking her embroidery with her*). Yes; mother.

(*Exit lower door R.*)

SIR EVERARD (*to FELIX*). Excuse me for interrupting you.

MISS CHILWORTH (*to FELIX with curiosity*). You were saying——?

FELIX. I was about to say that that passage where the courtesan goes down on her knees and prays, has true religious feeling.

MISS CHILWORTH (*disappointed*). Ah, yes.

SIR EVERARD (*looking at his watch*). If you're going up to, rest, Mary, you've not got much time.

LADY CHILWORTH (*rising*). Very well! (*Drops work—to FELIX who has picked up her work-bag for her.*) Thank you. Dinner is at eight. You'll hear the dressing bell at seven thirty. (*Going.*) Are you coming, Agatha?

MISS CHILWORTH (*rises*). Oh, if you wish it. (*Looks at FELIX and smiles.*)

(*Then exits lower door R. following LADY CHILWORTH.*)

SIR EVERARD (*with a sigh of relief*). Ah! Now the women and children have gone we can talk. Another cigarette?

FELIX. No, thanks.

SIR EVERARD. Well, what do you think of my boy, Pascoe?

PASCOE. Cecil?

SIR EVERARD. No, no, Everard.

PASCOE. He's grown quite a man since I last saw him.

SIR EVERARD. We shall be asking you to his wedding one of these days.

PASCOE. Already?

SIR EVERARD. As soon as he's left Oxford. I was younger than that when I married. A man ought to marry early—keeps him out of mischief.

FELIX (*crosses L. of settee by fire, is examining picture over mantel a little disdainfully*). Is this not a portrait of your eldest son?

SIR EVERARD (*pleased, rises, crosses R.*). You recognize it?

FELIX. By the hunting suit.

SIR EVERARD. Looks well in it, doesn't he? And so he will in a uniform.

FELIX. Ah, he is to be a soldier? (*Sits on end of settee by fire.*)

SIR EVERARD. I'm arranging to send him into the cavalry for a few years.

FELIX. And the younger son? Also in the army?

SIR EVERARD. No, no, he must work. I shall turn him into an engineer. He's got to make his way in the world.

FELIX. Ah yes, he has to make his way while his brother's way is ready made. This is one of the old curiosities of England—this favouritism of the eldest son. What a law!

SIR EVERARD. It isn't a law—it's a matter of custom and common sense, with, if I may say so, a spice of religious feeling.

FELIX (*interested*). How so?

SIR EVERARD. Well, take the case of a modest country squire like myself. I never grudge the time or trouble I take because every tree I plant, every road I make will some day make things easier for my heir. (*With great conviction.*) I believe that in the eyes of Providence I'm only a steward for my son. He, in his turn, will be a steward for his. We hold the estate in trust for one another.

FELIX (*enlightened, rises, turns to PASCOE and then*

to SIR EVERARD). Ah ! It is a trust. But they are busting them all, these trusts, standard oils and steel trades. When will the Eldest-son-trust go

SIR EVERARD. Never, I hope. (*Warmly.*) For it's one of the things that has made England. What would become of our great families, of our beautiful homes without it ? If a man leaves his estate to his eldest son, the family name and prestige are maintained. But once let him divide his property among a parcel of boys and girls, and the old home gets sold up to a brewer or an American, and the family's gone to destruction.

FELIX (C.). To leave all to the eldest son is " good business."

PASCOE (*sits on arm of settee*). But a little hard on younger sons.

FELIX. And daughters.

(*Warn motor horn.*)

SIR EVERARD. Not at all ! They're glad to sacrifice themselves—at least, they ought to be.

FELIX. Ah, in France we have found the solution to all these family difficulties

SIR EVERARD. What's that ?

FELIX. Do not have any family. (*Sits chair R. of table C.*)

(*Enter CECIL door R.U.*)

CECIL (*comes C.*). Mr. Coggins has seen the mare, father, and says now can you see him.

SIR EVERARD. Good ! I'll see him at once. (*Going.*) Make yourselves at home, you two. Cecil, go up stairs.

(*Exit door R.U.*)

FELIX (*shivering*). Brrr ! By Jove, it is cold.

(*Rises : he goes up to window and closes it.*)

PASCOE (*to CECIL who is coming down with a determined air and going R.*). Where are you off to?

CECIL (C.). I suppose it's to get a whacking.

EASCOE (C.). What?

CECIL. It always means that when father says I'm to be in his study at seven. (*Rather proudly.*) I knew I should get a whacking if I answered back.

PASCOO. Then why did you?

CECIL. Sometimes you want so much to do a thing you know you'll jolly well get punished for, that it's worth getting punished just to jolly well do it.

PASCOE. Cecil, you've enunciated such a great truth that I must reward you. (*Slips a sovereign into the boy's hand.*)

(*Motor horn.*)

CECIL. I say, Pascoe, you are a brick. I was down to keys.

(*He runs out R. lower door.*)

(*Outside a motor with lamps lit is seen to pass from R. to L. on its way to stop at the front door.*)

FELIX (*up at window*). Look, Pascoe, look! A motor is coming.

PASCOE. That must be Mrs. Wishaw.

(*In a second TIDDER comes in by door R.U. and crosses to vestibule.*)

FELIX (*coming down C.*). Ah, the married daughter. Is she good-looking?

PASCOE (*gruffly*). How should I know? (*Crosses L.*). You'll see for yourself.

FELIX. Ah! Either you are ashamed to say how plain she is or you admire her too much for words.

(*TIDDER opens front door. Enter BEATRICE CHILWORTH WISHAW, through the vestibule and into the hall. She is a beautiful woman of twenty-eight, with charming and graceful manners. She is richly*

gowned and as she stands in the door, wrapped in a long fur coat, and throws back the veil from her coquettish motor bonnet, she strikes a note of modern refinement and complexity. She comes down L.)

PASCOE (*meeting her*). Beatrice!

BEATRICE. Pascoe! Dear old Pascoe! (*Giving him both her hands.*) Fancy you being here!

PASCOE (*banteringly*). I must have had an intuition that you were coming.

FELIX (*cross L. coughing for an introduction*). Hum! Hum!

PASCOE (*not letting go of BEATRICE'S hands*). Let me introduce a friend of mine. Felix Fourié, Mrs. Wishaw.

BEATRICE (*bowing*). How do you do?

FELIX. Very fit, thank you kindly.

BEATRICE (*laughingly*). Let go of my hands, Pascoe, I want to get out of this heavy coat.

PASCOE (*relinquishing her hands*). Do you?

FELIX (*rushing at her*). Permit me! (*Waving PASCOE aside he helps BEATRICE off with her coat.*)

(*TIDDER who has taken a hand bag from the motor and closed the front door now comes down vestibule and into hall.*)

BEATRICE (*down L. front, free of the coat, with a little sigh of relief*). Ah, that's better. (*To FELIX, pulling off her gloves.*) Thank you.

FELIX. The pleasure was thoroughly mine. (*Triumphant at having assisted her, he folds the coat nicely and turns to give it to TIDDER up L.C.*)

(*When FELIX'S back is safely turned, BEATRICE swiftly puts her fingers to PASCOE'S lips in a caressing, longing gesture. He snatches them greedily and kisses them. As FELIX starts to turn around she draws her hand away. FELIX joins them serenely unaware of their secret understanding.*)

PASCOE (*to BEATRICE, in a natural, bantering tone for FELIX'S benefit*). Don't you find it very warm in here?

BEATRICE (*seriously*). Very.

PASCOE (*with a malicious glance at FELIX, leaning over back of settee L.C.*). Shall I open the window?

BEATRICE. No—I'll keep away from the fire. (*Sits on settee L.C. front.*)

TIDDER (*crossing to her*). Does Fulcott come by train, ma'am?

BEATRICE. No. I left her at home, Tidder. As I'm leaving here to-morrow morning, I thought I could do without her. (*Giving him key*). Ask Dorman if she'll unpack for me.

TIDDER. Dorman will be only too honoured, ma'am. It's a great pleasure to see you back here, ma'am. (*Going up.*)

BEATRICE. Thank you, Tidder.

PASCOE. That's what you said to me, Tidder.

TIDDER (*going: from window*). And meant it, sir. Pleased to see you both—both.

PASCOE. Thank you, Tidder.

(*Exit TIDDER door R.U.*)

BEATRICE (*looking round*). How little it ever seems to change here. I know mother's gone upstairs to rest. And father and Everard have just come in from hunting? But where's Amy?

PASCOE. Why a novel of mine was mentioned and she was suddenly sent on an errand.

(*FELIX crosses to fire.*)

BEATRICE. Delightful! To think that you're the famous author of books Amy mustn't read. Why, if I close my eyes I'm a schoolgirl again. And you're a gawky boy spending your holidays with us. Ah, me!

(*She opens her eyes with a sigh to find that SIR EVERARD*

has come in door R.U. Rising, oddly subdued by the presence of her father.)

Father ! •

SIR EVERARD (*crossing to her*). How are you, Beatrice ?

BEATRICE. Well, father.

(He gives her a perfunctory kiss on the forehead.)

And you ?

SIR EVERARD. Quite well. How's Lionel ?

BEATRICE (*sitting again*). I hardly know.

SIR EVERARD. What do you mean ?

BEATRICE. A member's wife scarcely sees him when the House is sitting, you know. (*Sits settee.*)

SIR EVERARD. Ah yes. Of course. Well, remember me to him and say I thought that caricature of him in *Vanity Fair* an excellent likeness. (*Crosses to R.*)

BEATRICE (*smiling, but a little piqued*). But father, I'm not leaving yet. I've just come.

SIR EVERARD (*absent-mindedly*). Your mother'll be very pleased to see you. And Amy. (*Comes c.*)

BEATRICE. How are they ?

SIR EVERARD. Oh, all right, I suppose. Much the same as usual.

BEATRICE (*watching for the effect she knows her words will have*). And how is Everard, father ?

SIR EVERARD (*with animation*). Oh, Everard, poor boy ! He's had a bad shock, Beatrice. His new mare—the beauty I bought him at Tattersall's—he may not be able to ride her for months.

BEATRICE (*almost pityingly*). Ah yes, that would be a great shock to Everard.

SIR EVERARD. He was inconsolable until I promised him another. I shall have to mount him myself to-morrow.

(A gong sounds.)

BEATRICE. The dressing-bell ? Already ? (*Rising.*) Do you know where they've put me ?

SIR EVERARD. Where were you last time?

BEATRICE. In the State Rooms. But Lionel was with me then.

SIR EVERARD. Oh, if you were given the State Rooms last time you're sure to be having them again. (*Going, looks at watch.*) Excuse me. Cecil's waiting for me in the study.

(*Exit R.*)

BEATRICE (*looks round*). What's Cecil been doing?

PASCOE. Answering back.

BEATRICE (*gathering up her things to go*). Poor boy! (*Crosses R.*)

PASCOE (*putting his hand on her arm*). Don't worry. He doesn't.

FELIX (*intercepting BEATRICE*). Pardon me. Your father mentioned the "State Rooms." Whose state?

BEATRICE. Oh, they're only the rooms that have been prepared for Royalty whenever they honour "Ledgers" with a visit—about once every other century. (*Goes R.*)

FELIX. Oh, for Royalty. Then no wonder they give those rooms to you, my dear Mrs. Wishaw.

BEATRICE (*on step*). Pascoe, I do like Frenchmen.

(*Exit R. lower door.*)

FELIX (*looking after her appreciatively*). She is A.I. (*Faces PASCOE.*)

PASCOE (*coldly*). Really?

FELIX. What is the husband like? (*Crosses L.*)

PASCOE. Like a Member of Parliament. (*Crosses L.*)

FELIX. Old?

PASCOE. Middle-aged.

FELIX. Has she any lovers?

PASCOE (*furious, crosses to FELIX*). When you ask me damned impertinent questions like that, Felix, I want to punch your head.

FELIX. Oh! Oh! Gently! If a lovely young woman is married to a middle-aged man who is always sitting in Parliament, surely it is a natural question to ask?

PASCOE. Not in this country.

FELIX. Oh! As if——

PASCOE. Well, not of me—about Beatrice Wishaw. She's one of my oldest friends. How the devil should I know whether she loves her husband or not? (*Cross to fireplace.*)

FELIX (*crosses to PASCOE*). There! There! I apologise a thousand times. I was seeking a little excitement in the life. The only emotion I have seen these people show is for a horse. Here is a husband and wife, a daughter married to a Member of Parliament, and all satisfied and true to each other. You must admit that it is discouraging for a writer.

PASCOE. Possibly.

FELIX (*by chair R. of table*). Ah, no wonder the word "bluff" was invented in England. Your velvety green lawns are always too wet to stand on, your tempting apples are never ripe enough to eat, your beautiful women are cold.

PASCOE. How do you know that the coldness isn't a "bluff" as well?

FELIX. What? Are they like their rooms—very chilly on one side and very warm on the other?

PASCOE. I won't admit that but I deny that they're cold.

FELIX. But I do not see——

PASCOE. What does the outsider ever see from the social side of life? (*Comes to him.*) A group of people round a tea-table in a drawing-room, passing bread and butter and concealing their thoughts. And all the time what's going on in each separate room of the house, in each separate beating heart in the house?

FELIX. What? What?

PASCOE. Ah! That's what you can never know.

Unless, like Asmodeous, you take the roofs off the houses and look in.

FELIX. No, no, I will not take the roofs off ! The English would not notice it, but I should feel the draught.

PASCOE. Then you'll have to take my word for us. (*Heatedly.*) And I solmenly declare that we are the most hot-blooded, warm-hearted, muddle-headed people in existence, capable of more generous quixotic, reckless impulses than any other nation whatsoever. We're the sentimentalists of the world. We're 'fools, we're babies, we're lover's, we're saints and martyrs—we're everything that's beautiful, and nothing that's wise.

FELIX. Eh ! What exultation ! What has gone to your head ? The eyes of the pretty lady, eh, what ?

PASCOE (*slapping him on the shoulder*). Pretty lady nothing, you French fool. Come and dress ! I'm hungry and I heard the dinner bell !

(*They go off lower door R.*)

CURTAIN

ACT II

SCENE.—*The Schoolroom.*

Although no longer used as a schoolroom, this room has scarcely been changed since BEATRICE and EVERARD were children. At back a long, practical bookcase holds, behind a brass netting, a motley array of school and reference books. On top of the bookcase a globe, a microscope and a plaster bust of Julius Cæsar. On the R. a curved step leads up to a cupboard which runs the whole length of the wall. Above cupboard a bowed casement window, which is leaded. On the top of the cupboard which serves as a ledge to window, a miscellaneous row of childish objects, a golly-wog, wild flowers in a jam jar, a black cat, a china savings bank, a ship, etc. On the L. a fireplace, with a door either side. Upper door L. leads to the hall, lower door L. to CECIL'S bedroom. There is a club fender at fireplace, a cheery fire is burning. Down the centre of room is set a narrow schoolroom table with a linoleum cloth. A miscellaneous pile of books belonging to Brock on the upper end of the table, and on the lower end the remains of a dinner, which has been brought to CECIL on a tray. A small leather armchair up L. by fireplace. In the R. corner R. of bookcase, a child's high-chair. The table chairs are scattered about. The walls are light, woodwork white; matting on the floor with a centre square of red carpet. R. and L. of bookcase are pictures of animals. Above the mantelpiece a coloured print of a little girl and a fox terrier. There are no curtains to the window;

it is bright moonlight outside. The room is lit by a centre light; switch by upper l. Both doors open in to the room.

(At rise CECIL is discovered sitting on lower corner of table, finishing a boat which he has been carving out of wood, and whistling cheerfully as the shavings fall on the carpet. Well satisfied he puts boat on mantelpiece and takes from there some chestnuts, which he brings c. counting them affectionately. Enter DORMAN upper door l. stealthily, with her apron over something she carries.)

DORMAN (breathless). Here I am, Master Cecil.

CECIL. You were an age. *(With a glance at the tray.)* I finished the rest hours ago.

DORMAN. Cook thought the custard ought to have been enough for you. *(Crosses above table to R. of it. Whisking her apron away and revealing a large blancmange.)* They hadn't touched this in the dining-room. They never do when there's trifle. Even clergymen. But as I said to Cook, when a young gentleman has been caned by his Pa he can do with two desserts. *(Sets plate on table.)*

CECIL *(taking a chair to lower R. end of table)*. Was there any trifle left? I don't care much for this. It goes down too quick.

DORMAN. No, Master Cecil *(crosses to look at clock on mantelpiece)*, and I'm waiting to clear your dishes. It's ten o'clock, and the drawing-room's broke up *(seeing the shavings on the floor)*, tsh! Tsh!

CECIL *(slowly and systematically attacking blancmange)*. Have they gone to bed already?

DORMAN *(getting hearth broom and shovel from fireplace)*. William's just taken in the barley water. They never stay long after that.

CECIL. William's a silly footman, he won't pass dishes three times.

DORMAN *(sweeping up the shavings—trying to pump*

him). It must be hard on a young gentleman who eats well not to be let in to table.

CECIL (*with bravado*). Oh, that's all right. It's rather jolly missing dinner as long as you don't miss the feed.

DORMAN. Your brother now, he never was one to get punished. But then, as my old father used to say, "the hair's the hair." (*Putting shavings into fire.*)

CECIL. I tell you what, Dorman, one of these days I shall give up being a second son. (*Puts chestnuts on cupboard at back.*)

DORMAN (*piling the dishes neatly on tray*). How'll you do that, Master Cecil?

CECIL (*mysteriously*). You'll see. It's not that I mind Everard having the best of everything—what I can't bear is Father always taking his side against me.

DORMAN (*puts jug up at back on bookcase*). What are you going to do about it, Master Cecil?

CECIL. I shall cut it.

DORMAN. Where to?

CECIL. Oh, to sea of course. Then they'll all be jolly sorry they didn't appreciate me.

DORMAN (*taking his napkin from him and folding it*). I shouldn't try that on with a firm gentleman like your Pa.

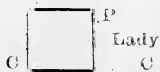
CECIL (*so interested he stops eating*). What could Father do if I was gone?

DORMAN. He'd set the police on you.

CECIL (*a little weakened but shaking his head*). But they wouldn't know me.

DORMAN (*triumphantly*). Yes, they would. They'd have your photograph marconied to all the papers.

CECIL (*bitterly*). Would they? What a sell electricity is!



(Enter LADY CHILWORTH upper door L. She is in evening dress. CECIL rises, pushes blancmange L.)

DORMAN (surprised). Oh! (Bustling.) I just came in to see to Master Cecil, your ladyship, as William was——

LADY CHILWORTH (cutting her short). I shall want you presently Dorman, to unhook me.

DORMAN (going). Thank you, your ladyship. (Crosses above L.C.)

(Exit upper door L.)

LADY CHILWORTH (shyly). Are—are you all right, Cecil?

CECIL (scenting sympathy and resenting it, stolidly). Yes, mother.

LADY CHILWORTH. Have you had all you want to eat?

CECIL (with a sidelong glance at the interrupted blancmange). Yes, mother.

LADY CHILWORTH (longing to be affectionate with him and not daring). I'm sorry your father had to punish you. I—I hope he wasn't very severe?

CECIL. No, mother.

LADY CHILWORTH (exasperated). Oh! Can't you say something besides "Yes, mother, no, mother?"

CECIL (astonished). Yes, mother.

(Enter SIR EVERARD upper door L., smoking cigar.)

SIR EVERARD. What are you doing here, Mary?

LADY CHILWORTH. I was only making sure Cecil had been seen to. (Hopefully; with a little movement to him.) Is that what you came for?

SIR EVERARD. No. I have to speak to Brock about Everard.

CECIL. He's not come up yet.

SIR EVERARD. I'll wait for him. Time you were in bed, Cecil.

CECIL. Good night, father.

SIR EVERARD Good night, my boy. (*Knocks ash into fire.*)

CECIL. Good night, mother.

(LADY CHILWORTH *kisses him.*)

(*As CECIL goes, he unostentatiously gets hold of the plate of blancmange and carries it off with him. Exit lower door L.*)

SIR EVERARD. Is the day that I've had to punish Cecil for impertinence quite the most fitting time for you to be making a fuss of the lad, Mary?

LADY CHILWORTH (*bitterly*). I wasn't aware that anything I did was important enough to interfere with your discipline.

SIR EVERARD (*surprised at her tone*). I must maintain my authority, you understand.

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, I understand.

SIR EVERARD. How oddly you speak.

LADY CHILWORTH (*repenting her rashness*). Do I?

SIR EVERARD. What's wrong? Aren't you well?

LADY CHILWORTH (*going up by R. of armchair. Eager to escape*). Quite well, thanks.

SIR EVERARD (*goes up L. of armchair, faces her. Interposing her*). Then what's the matter with you?

LADY CHILWORTH (*trying to speak lightly*). Why, nothing (*goes down, fingers edges of table*), Everard, nothing.

SIR EVERARD (*obstinately*). Yes, here is. (*Goes to her.*) Have I done anything to upset you?

LADY CHILWORTH (*more and more nervous. Comes down to fire*). No, no, of course not. We always get on very nicely, don't we?

SIR EVERARD. You've some grievance.

LADY CHILWORTH (*on the verge of tears. Looking into fire*). It's only that I suddenly feel so overlooked—so lonely—you're always shutting me out—you take so little notice of me.

SIR EVERARD. Overlooked? How do you mean? Notice of you! (*Puzzled.*) I never pay attention to other women.

LADY CHILWORTH. No, no, never. (*Choking back her tears.*) I knew you'd think I was absurd.

SIR EVERARD (*patiently*). Not at all. I'd like to understand. What started you in this strain?

LADY CHILWORTH (*sits armchair*). It must have been something that Monsieur Fourié said. Frenchmen seem to think a lot about a woman's feelings.

SIR EVERARD (*down a little. Drily*). Yes, they think too much of 'em.

LADY CHILWORTH (*with a flash of resentment*). Perhaps that's better than thinking too little. Perhaps that's better than letting a woman realize she doesn't matter any more.

SIR EVERARD. Matter? (*Proudly.*) You're my wife! What more could you be to me?

LADY CHILWORTH (*softly*). There was a difference once—when the girls were little—before the boys were born—you spoke to me differently then—you looked at me differently—

SIR EVERARD (*taken aback*). If you mean you'd like me to talk sentimental twaddle to you—Come, come, Mary, we've outgrown that sort of thing.

LADY CHILWORTH (*wincing*). Am I such an old woman?

SIR EVERARD. Of course not. But (*as an unanswerable argument*) your children are grown up! I can't pay you compliments and fetch and carry as perhaps I did then. That sort of thing goes with the mating season.

LADY CHILWORTH. I wonder if the thrushes are ashamed of their songs once the nest is full. (*Rises.*) Probably. (*Goes to fire.*) I suppose you're right.

SIR EVERARD. Of course I am. Your nerves are a little out of order, my dear. Why not take Amy and run down to Brighton for a few days?

LADY CHILWORTH. I'm tired of Brighton.

SIR EVERARD. It'll brace you up and I'll join you for the week-end.

LADY CHILWORTH. If you wish it. (*Going.*)

SIR EVERARD (*kindly*). You mustn't have a breakdown, you know. What should we do without you at "Ledgers?"

LADY CHILWORTH (*pausing up L.*) Oh, your sister could take my place as head of your house. She covets it already. (*By upper door L.*)

SIR EVERARD (*annoyed*). Agatha's a meddling, some fool. I'd never have her here at all if it wasn't my duty.

LADY CHILWORTH. Are all "old" women in the way?

SIR EVERARD. No. Not when they've children, as you have, and can live on in them.

LADY CHILWORTH. Live on in my children? (*Shaking her head*). They won't let me. What do I know of their hopes and fears and longings? They never tell me anything.

SIR EVERARD (*strangely surprised; up a little*). Do you mean to say your children hide things from you? That seems very strange.

LADY CHILWORTH (*goes to him*). My children are afraid of me because they bracket me with you. They daren't tell mother anything for fear she'll "tell father." So it's really less strange than you think. (*Pause.*)

(*Enter EVERARD upper door L.*)

EVERARD. Hello, Mater!

(*LADY CHILWORTH crosses below him in silence.*)

Why are you off in such a hurry?

LADY CHILWORTH (*stops L. of him*). I'm being shut out once again, Everard, that's all!

(*Exit upper door L., she shuts door L.*)

EVERARD (*opening his eyes, to his father*). What's wrong with her?

SIR EVERARD. Nothing at all. (*Planting himself in front of fireplace.*) It's just one of those moods women always have whenever a man's got something else to worry him. (*Comes down L. of table c.*)

EVERARD. What's worrying you? (*Comes down to fire and sits club fender.*)

SIR EVERARD. Brock says he won't be responsible if you fail in mods. again!

EVERARD. I thought he'd been making mischief, that's why I followed you up. Brock indeed! It's about time we got rid of him.

SIR EVERARD. I have no intention of getting rid of your coach simply because you're slack, Everard.,

(*Enter WILLIAM up L.*)

WILLIAM (*at door, seeing SIR EVERARD*). Oh, I beg pardon, I came for the tray.

SIR EVERARD. Take it—take it. (*Crosses and sits chair L. of table.*)

EVERARD (*after a pause*). William, tell Mr. Brock that Sir Everard and I are waiting in the school-room to speak to him.

WILLIAM. Very good, sir. (*Going with tray.*)

EVERARD. You will find him in the billiard room.

(*Exit WILLIAM upper door L.*)

(*Sits on club fender*). Makes himself free of the house, does the tutor.

SIR EVERARD (*surprised*). What have you to say to Brock?

EVERARD. I would rather tell him before you, father.

SIR EVERARD. Very well (*To chair.*) But play fair, my boy. It's not Brock's fault if you are lazy and your father's too indulgent.

EVERARD (*rises*). That's what he says, is it? Well, he won't be here long.

SIR EVERARD (*angry*). Once for and all, Everard, I shall not dismiss Brock. You must buckle to. If you're sent down next time, Heaven knows when I can get you in the Cavalry.

EVERARD. Does it matter much?

SIR EVERARD. Matter? We've all been in the army for generations?

EVERARD (*crosses below him to below table c. bored*). Yes, I know.

SIR EVERARD (*rises*). Besides, old Hazleton won't have your engagement to Alice announced until you've left College.

EVERARD. Oh, Alice'll bring him round. It's quite the thing now not to get your degree. None of the nuts do.

SIR EVERARD (*going to him, putting both hands on his shoulders; speaking with intense affection*). I sometimes wonder if you realize all the hopes that are centred in you. Ever since you were born I've looked forward to seeing you a man, ready to take my place in the country. It's for this that I've planned and contrived all these years, denied myself, stinted your mother and sisters. And now you seem so heedless of it all—careless, extravagant—

EVERARD (*shifting uneasily*). It's all very well to talk about bein' extravagant, father, but people know I'm the eldest son. They expect things of me.

SIR EVERARD. So do I, Everard. I expect a fine record, a good name. (*Clapping him on the shoulders, moved*). Don't disappoint me.

(*Enter BROCK upper door L. SIR EVERARD intently severe, leaves EVERARD and resumes his place in front of the fire.*)

BROCK (*coming in, anxiously*). Have I kept you waiting? You wish to speak to me, Sir Everard?

SIR EVERARD (*on fender*). Sit down, Brock. Everard seems to have something to say to you.

EVERARD (*standing centre—folding his arms tri-*

umphantly). I think it's time you told my father what you mean by making love to my sister Amy.

BROCK (*springing up*). What!

SIR EVERARD (*incredulously*). Amy! E B Sir E

EVERARD. (*to BROCK*). You didn't think I saw you kissing her that time I came so suddenly into the arbour or that I ever noticed the little three-cornered notes you slipped under the door. I may be a duffer at Greek, Brock, but I'm not such a fool at *that* language.

SIR EVERARD (*rising utterly amazed—to EVERARD*). Why didn't you tell me this before, Everard?

BROCK. He was saving it for when it would prove most useful.

EVERARD. You see, he can't even deny it.

BROCK. No, I don't deny that I love your sister.

SIR EVERARD (*to BROCK*). This is a matter you and I must discuss alone, Brock. Leave us, Everard.

EVERARD. But, father——

SIR EVERARD. Leave us.

EVERARD. Oh, very well. (*Going*.) I was goin' down to the stables anyway.

SIR EVERARD. I'll join you there.

EVERARD (*turning at door*). Oh, by the way, Brock, I'm huntin' to-morrow. I shan't be requiring a lesson from *you*.

(*Exit upper door L.*)

SIR EVERARD (*as if he could annihilate him*). How long has this been going on?

BROCK (*meeting his gaze unflinchingly*). I have been in love with your daughter for two years.

SIR EVERARD. When did you tell her?

BROCK. About a year ago.

SIR EVERARD (*incredulous. Goes to him a little*). Then Amy has deliberately kept this from me all this time.

BROCK. She loves me.

SIR EVERARD (*crosses to him*). You leave this house to-morrow morning, d'you hear?

BROCK. Yes.

SIR EVERARD. And I absolutely forbid you to hold any communication with her in the future.

BROCK. I hear what you say.

SIR EVERARD (*raises his voice*). I warn you that I shall do my utmost to keep you apart.

BROCK (*looking straight ahead of him*). I have doubt of that.

SIR EVERARD. You were in a position of trust in this house and you've grossly abused it.

BROCK (*impatiently. Crosses to R. of table c*). You can't reproach me any more than I've reproached myself.

SIR EVERARD (*slightly mollified*). Then why the devil didn't you do the right thing? Did you imagine I should let her marry a man in your position?

BROCK. No!

SIR EVERARD. No! Yet you didn't scruple to make love to her?

BROCK (*to himself*). There may be between a man and a woman a feeling so deep, so true to nature, that not to confess it is to rob the being you love.

SIR EVERARD. Stuff and nonsense! Any man who makes love to a young girl he knows he can't marry is a damned scoundrel.

BROCK. Have you finished?

SIR EVERARD. No. Your romantic excuses could only impose on a woman, Brock. Tsh! You're not the first ambitious youth who's tried to get into a family by working on the vanity of an inexperienced girl!

BROCK (*furiously*). You have no right to say that!

SIR EVERARD. You had no right to make love to my daughter.

BROCK. I've not taken advantage of her inexperience in any way.

SIR EVERARD. For all that you'll leave my house

to-morrow. (*Crosses up R. of armchair toward door up stage.*)

BROCK. I will indeed.

SIR EVERARD (*by door up L.*). You need not leave until the ten forty five.

BROCK. Don't be afraid, Sir Edward, I shan't make any fuss.

SIR EVERARD (*going*). As for Amy, I shall pack her off somewhere where you won't be able to get at her—so spare yourself any useless attempts.

(*Exit upper door L.*)

(*BROCK sinks on table and sits thinking—his head in his hands. Lower door L. opens and CECIL sticks his head in. He is now in pyjamas.*)

CECIL. Has father gone?

BROCK (*startled*). Yes.

CECIL (*coming in*). I say, has there been a dust-up?

BROCK. Oh, nothing much. But I find I've got to leave "Ledgers" to-morrow.

CECIL. What luck for you. (*Looking round.*) Where are my chestnuts? You haven't eaten them?

BROCK. No.

CECIL. They're not so good raw. (*Finding the chestnuts on ledge of bookcase.*) Ah!

(*He kneels in front of fire and puts the chestnuts to roast. Simultaneously enter PASCOE upper door L.*)

PASCOE. May I come in? Felix and I had a splendid game.

BROCK (*absent-mindedly*). Did you?

PASCOE. A perfect game! I beat him.

(*BROCK silent.*)

I say, old man, did you ask me in for a smoke?

BROCK (*rises, rousing himself*). Of course. (*Crosses*

below table, goes up R. of it.) I'll get my pipe. (Goes up and gets pipe and tobacco from cupboard.)

PASCOE (*by fireplace, to CECIL*). Chestnuts! I adore them!

CECIL (*cautiously*). They're not nearly ready to eat yet.

PASCOE. Then suppose you come back for them presently.

CECIL (*rises, crosses to door down L. stops by door*). You won't touch them?

PASCOE (*comes down*). Cross my heart.

(CECIL *does so. Exit CECIL lower door L.*)

(Sits in armchair). So this is your sanctum now. What tea-parties Bee and I used to have here! I can still see the glorious golden slabs of bread and butter and smell the perfume of the raspberry jam.

BROCK (*cleaning his pipe*). What you smell is probably Cecil's dinner.

PASCOE. No, no, it's an aroma from the past, for with it I hear the melodious crackle of starched pinafores.

BROCK. You heard me cleaning my pipe.

PASCOE. You can't disillusionize me.

BROCK. Lucky dog! (*Offers him tobacco*.)

PASCOE. No thanks. (*Sitting in armchair*.) Brock, there's something I particularly want to talk to you about.

BROCK. Nothing improving, I hope. (*Loading his pipe*.) I'm horribly depressed to-night.

PASCOE (*taking a cigarette from his own case*). Poor old chap, you're in very deep.

BROCK. In what?

PASCOE. In love.

BROCK (*with a nervous laugh*). This comes of having a novelist for a friend! (*Crosses below him to fire*.) You're like the Post-Impressionists, Tandrige, you see the primary colours everywhere.

(PASCOE *lights his cigarette. BROCK lights pipe, matches on mantelpiece*.)

PASCOE. Well, and once you blow away a little British fog, aren't the primary colours always there?

BROCK. What right have I to be in "love." "Classics" at St. Giles, Eastbourne, £90 a year and board, must be a bachelor. (*Abruptly.*) What was it you wanted to talk to me about?

PASCOE. That very thing. How is it that with all your scholarship and imagination and steadiness you're not doing better?

BROCK. I shall in time.

PASCOE. Ever had a decent chance in the Colonies?

BROCK. Yes—on the West Coast.

PASCOE. Afraid of the climate?

BROCK. If that had been all?

PASCOE. I see. *She* lives in England!

BROCK. It's a blind alley, Pascoe. They won't let me have her, and I can't take her by force into a life like mine, to face all this uncertainty. (*Springing up step to PASCOE.*) What a fool a man is to care for a young girl until he's got on. (*Walks to above table up R.*) The better and finer the love, the more it's out of his reach. God! What wouldn't I give to be able to stop feeling! (*Pausing up R.*) This constant struggle for self-control—that keeps one on the rack—do you know—you'll laugh at me, but I mean it—I sometimes long to be an old, old man—to have done with it all—just to sit in the sun and look on—to be beyond this torment—to live without feeling—what blessed freedom! (*Turns to the window.*)

PASCOE. But what wouldn't the old old man who sits in the sun give to be young again and to suffer? (*Rising and going to him.*) The outlook is not as black as you think, Block.

(BROCK about to protest.)

All you're suffering from is a dearth of uncles.

BROCK (*puzzled*). Uncles?

PASCOE (*taking him by the arm and bringing him*

down R.C.). Precisely. (*Pushes BROCK into chair.*) No man can get on in England without Uncles. If they like him they push him, if they dislike him they get him comfortable billets in the Colonies.

BROCK. Are you proposing to find me a foster-uncle?

PASCOE. I have my eye on an influential man who's never bothered to use his influence before. (*Sits on R. edge of table.*) When that type of uncle asks a favour people are so surprised they grant it. Now Sir Everard has a connexion on the governing board of the British Museum.

BROCK (*taken aback*). Sir Everard?

PASCOE. They're sending another exploring expedition to Egypt soon—a fine opening—with a screw to marry on! I believe I can get Sir Everard to put in one word that will just——

BROCK (*rises*). No, no, you mustn't ask Sir Everard to help me. I forbid it, Tandridge, I positively forbid it.

PASCOE (*surprised*). So it's Amy you're in love with.

BROCK. Yes

B. P.

PASCOE. Amy Chilworth! (*Rises.*) Then it is worse than I thought.

BROCK. You see!

PASCOE. But don't give her up, Brock, whatever you do don't give her up! For *her* sake!

BROCK. How do you mean?

PASCOE. A few years ago, Brock, I loved a girl like Amy and she loved me. But my people had lost their money, I was doing hack journalistic work, the father wouldn't hear of it. He rushed her into a marriage with a rich man—a man notoriously the slave of another woman—and the result has been misery. (*Crosses to L.C.*) Misery!

BROCK (*pauses, speaks when PASCOE has stopped walking. Surprised*). So it was Beatrice Wishaw!

PASCOE. Yes!

BROCK (*goes to him*). I always wondered how Sir Everard came to let his daughter marry a rotter like Wishaw.

PASCOE. To get her out of my reach—it was the lesser of two evils. And now good-night, old man.

(*They grip hands.*)

I'll think this over ; I may find means of helping you yet.

BROCK. Thanks, old man, but I'm afraid it's hopeless at present.

PASCOE. Nothing's hopeless.

(*Exit PASCOE upper door L.*)

(BROCK *knocks his pipe and puts it away, puts jar back. Lower door L. opens and BEATRICE puts her head in.*)

BEATRICE. May we come in, Mr. Brock ?

BROCK (*turning, surprised*). Of course, Mrs. Wishaw !

BEATRICE (*coming in, in evening dress, crosses below table R.*). And Miss Chilworth !

AMY (*also in evening dress, following her in*). And Master Chilworth !

(CECIL *stands in lower door L. rubbing his eyes.*)

Bee insisted on coming to kiss Cecil good-night.

BEATRICE. There was a time when I was more enthusiastically received.

CECIL. Well, I offered to show you my bruises.

(AMY *goes to fire.*)

BEATRICE. Ugh !

BROCK. That's Cecil's idea of being entertaining.

CECIL. Besides I'm too old to be kissed now. Besides it's Brock's room too. Just suppose he'd been in bed !

BEATRICE. Oh, I'd have been warned. Mr. Brock would have screamed like a gentleman.

BROCK. I deny it, Mrs. Wishaw!

CECIL (*suddenly remembering*). Crickey! My chestnuts!

(*He flies to the fireplace and takes out the chestnuts.*)

AMY (*to BROCK, watching BEATRICE who is waltzing about the room with golliwog from cupboard.*) Bee's in such high spirits to-night.

BEATRICE (*overhearing*). I feel as if I'd never married or been away from home, as if life were only beginning.

BROCK. I understand. (*Goes to her.*) This was your old school-room, wasn't it?

BEATRICE (*looking about, crosses up below BROCK*). I simply had to see it once again.

AMY. Once again, Bee? You talk as if you were never coming back to "Ledgers?"

BEATRICE. Do I? (*Flinging her arms about AMY up L.*) I'm foolish to-night, darling. Don't pay any attention to me. Do you remember when you and Everard and Pascoe and I used to hold our secret drum-hum here?

CECIL (*pricking up his ears*). Where was I?

BEATRICE. You were a cherub in the nursery in those days.

BROCK. What is a drum-hum?

BEATRICE. The reverse of hum-drum, of course.

CECIL (*rises with chestnuts*). Let's do it now!

BEATRICE. Yes, and eat chestnuts! (*Taking some from CECIL.*)

CECIL (*dampened*). But they're mine!

BEATRICE. Then of course you want us to have some. Come, we must sit close to the fire.

(*BEATRICE in upper chair by fire, CECIL kneeling on the hearthrug. BROCK and AMY sitting side by side on table.*)

(*Clapping her hands.*) The drum-hum has begun!

And now we can say whatever we like without being contradicted—we can criticize our elders—we can tell the truth—we can be rude—all the feelings that have to be swallowed during the day can pop out.

BROCK. I think a drum-hum is a grand institution. No home should be without one. You begin, Mrs. Wishaw.

BEATRICE. I say, aren't the evenings at home awful?

AMY. They've always been dull.

CECIL. They're worse since father bought a pianola.

AMY. Aunt Agatha pretends she likes it.

BEATRICE. I'm afraid she learned "How to be Popular" from a Girl's paper.

BROCK. Where they advice you to suit your conversation to the person you're with.

AMY. She talks about God to the Vicar and he gets so embarrassed.

CECIL (*grinding his teeth*). She calls me "darling" at the station. What must the railway porters think?

BEATRICE. Cave! Cave! She's in the room below us!

CECIL. I say, weren't they silly sending me out of the room this afternoon just because something naughty was going to be said?

AMY. They got rid of me too.

CECIL. Oh, that's different. You're only a girl.

BEATRICE. What were they talking about?

AMY. A book of Pascoe Tandridge's, "Dragon's Teeth."

BROCK. It's a masterpiece.

BEATRICE (*proudly*). Pascoe's a genius.

CECIL. I didn't see much in it.

BEATRICE (*bends down to him*). You don't mean to say you've read it, Cecil?

CECIL. Of course I've read it. Father never put me on my honour not to. He locked it up.

BEATRICE (*gives him a tap*). What's made Everard so swanky lately?

AMY. He's been accepted by Alice Hazleton.

BEATRICE (*surprised*). Already?

CECIL. Father's kept it a secret from us.

BROCK. You mean he thinks he has.

AMY. Since father let him be engaged, Everard has got above himself. He thinks it's clever now to be rude to his tutor. (*Rises—passionately, goes C. BROCK rises.*) I simply hate him for it.

BEATRICE (*rising, amazed*). Amy! (*She comes down to her, leaving chestnuts on the chair.*)

(*CECIL takes advantage of BEATRICE'S back being turned to eat some chestnuts and stuff the rest in the pocket of his pyjamas.*)

BROCK (*warningly*). Miss Chilworth doesn't quite mean what she says. (*Goes up behind her.*)

AMY (*carried away*). I do! I do! (*To BEATRICE.*) You don't know how they treat him! Day after day I have to watch father and Everard belittling and humiliating him and sometimes it makes me so frantic—I——

CECIL (*his mouth full*). I say, what's the matter with you, Amy?

(*BEATRICE watching AMY in alarm, BROCK trying to stop her. CECIL'S voice breaks the tension.*)

AMY (*coming to herself, to CECIL in a lighter tone*). Nothing, Cecil, what's the matter with you? (*Crosses to fire.*)

BROCK (*from back of armchair*). The little beggar—he's eaten all the chestnuts.

CECIL (*with his mouth full*). I haven't.

BEATRICE. What?

CECIL. I've only bitten them.

BEATRICE (*goes to him*). That's a serious breach of hospitality. You must be punished.

CECIL (*warily, back a little*). How?

BEATRICE. I shall kiss you again. (*Goes to him.*)

(*Warn Lights.*)

CECIL (*running away from her with shrill little screams; crosses below her to up R.*) No, no, Bee, it's not fair! I'm too old to be slobbered over. I——

(*BEATRICE pursues him.*)

BROCK (*aside to AMY*). Come back here as soon as you can. I've something very important to tell you.

AMY (*aside to BROCK*). I will—but——

BROCK. Ssh!

BEATRICE (*turning back to them with the kissed and crestfallen CECIL*). There! Now he's punished I——

(*Upper door L. opens and MISS CHILWORTH appears, wearing a dark wrapper.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*peevishly*). My dear children! What a noise you've been making! It's impossible to get any sleep.

BEATRICE. Oh, how thoughtless of us, Aunt Agatha.

CECIL (*gloomily*). I shall catch it again. Whenever there's a dust-up I'm the one to get dusted.

MISS CHILWORTH. Not that I mind not sleeping if it amuses you all. But what'll your dear father say if he sees a light burning here at this hour?

CECIL (*crosses L. below table*). Father's asleep in the west wing.

MISS CHILWORTH. No, he isn't. He went across to the stables about half an hour ago. I saw him quite distinctly in the moonlight.

BEATRICE AND AMY (*together*). Put out the light! (*Cecil darts up to switch and turns off the light.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. Well, wasn't it kind of your Aunt Agatha to come and warn you?

(*No one pays any attention to her. From the moment it is known that SIR EVERARD is about there is a sort of suppressed panic in the room.*)

BEATRICE. We must pack off to bed as quickly as possible. (*Kissing AMY.*) Good night, darling, off with you. (*She bundles her out upper door L.—crosses below table.*) Good night, Mr. Brock. Coming, Aunt Agatha?

(*BROCK crosses back of table C. to up R.*)

MISS CHILWORTH. In a moment.

(*Exit BEATRICE upper door L.*)

(*To CECIL who now stands yawning.*) And has the sandman come, my little man?

CECIL (*eyeing her ungallantly*). He might if you'd go.

MISS CHILWORTH (*going to him*). Aunt Agatha'll tuck you up in bed.

CECIL. No, she won't.

MISS CHILWORTH (*offended*). Oh, very well. (*Goes up L.*)

CECIL (*dreamily, comes to club fender and sits*). I say, I got an awful whacking this afternoon.

MISS CHILWORTH (*in a tone of whining pity*). My poor dear child. (*Pauses up L.*)

CECIL (*in a louder voice*). Would you like to see my bruises?

MISS CHILWORTH (*indignantly*). Certainly not.

(*Exits quickly upper door L.*)

CECIL (*coming to table*). I say, Brock, I'm jolly sorry you're off. Is there anything I can do?

BROCK (*coming to table with book from top of cupboard—surprised*). No, old man. Oh, you might

take these in. (*Giving him books from table.*) I'll be in presently to pack.

CECIL (*enviously*). I wish I could leave "Ledgers."

BROCK. I wish I could stay at "Ledgers."

CECIL. That's funny, isn't it?

(*BROCK nods, unable to speak, and smiles reassuringly at the boy.*)

(*Exit CECIL lower door L.*)

(*BROCK anxiously watches the other door. Goes L. then up at top of table. Bright firelight in the room, moonlight from the window. Enter AMY upper door L. breathless. Without a word BROCK draws her quickly into his arms, kisses her, and then puts her from him almost abruptly. Goes down a step.*)

AMY (*peering at him*). What's the matter? You frighten me! Has something happened?

BROCK. Yes.

AMY. It's father. (*Panic stricken.*) He knows!

BROCK. Yes.

AMY. How did he find out?

BROCK (*comes down*). Everard!

AMY. The sneak!

BROCK. Oh, he was in his rights. (*Down to near bottom end of table, not too far from chair.*) I'm a damned scoundrel.

AMY (*coming to him*). Is that what they think? How little they know. I loved your first.

BROCK. No, you didn't!

AMY. I did, I did! And if you hadn't told me that you loved me too, I couldn't have lived.

BROCK. You believe that now but if I'd held my tongue, I might have saved you some of this pain. (*Puts her hand down.*)

AMY. What makes you say that? They're not going to send you away?

BROCK. Yes.

AMY. John! John! You shan't go! You shan't go!

BROCK. I must. But I'll come back for you. (*Resolutely.*) Somehow, somewhere, I'm going to make money enough to come back and claim you—even if it means the West Coast first.

AMY (*catching hold of his arm*). No, no, not that—suppose you had fever and died out there—all alone—even if you got through—we'd be separated for years.

BROCK. That has to be in any case.

AMY. Oh, John! (*She bows her head over his arm, crying.*)

BROCK. We're not the only lovers who have been parted, my sweetheart.

AMY. None of the others ever loved each other as much as we do.

BROCK. Little Amy! Listen—(*Puts her in arm-chair, kneels by her k. of her*) promise you'll wait for me?

AMY. Wait for you? Indeed, indeed I will. But suppose I wait so long that I grow old and plain and cross?

BROCK (*smiling*). Not even if you did I should still love you, the Amy inside. It wasn't only pretty hair, and bright eyes I fell in love with, but a warm heart, a fine little soul.

AMY. No one but you sees anything in me—people think I'm only "another girl." But when I'm with you even I begin to believe I'm quite wonderful. (*Leaning her head against him.*) You're so good to me, you bring out the good in me.

BROCK. That's so easy.

AMY. You give me strength. (*Away from him.*) I'm an awful coward really but when you're beside me, I'm so brave—so brave I'm almost not afraid of father.

BROCK (*rises*). What's going to happen when I'm not beside you?

AMY (*firing up*). You keep coming back to that!

There are only two people in the world who care for me, Bee and you. I've lost Bee, and now you want to go away!

BROCK (*turns to her, reproachfully*). Want to?

AMY (*puts out her hand, repentant*). How unjust I am!

(*He goes to her, she takes his L. hand in hers.*)

I'll reproach myself when you're not here. (*Pitifully.*)

You will write every day?

(*He shakes his head.*)

Then every other day?

(*Warn Curtain.*)

BROCK. Darling, you won't be allowed to have my letters.

AMY. Not allowed to—Father wouldn't intercept them.

BROCK. He's given me fair warning he means to cure you.

AMY. I must hear from you—I must. You can write under cover to Bee——

BROCK. Mrs. Wishaw may object to——

AMY. Bee'll do it for me—before you go—(*lets her hand go.*) I'll persuade her—there's plenty of time.

BROCK (*goes away down stage a little. Trying to prepare her*). That's it—that's it, Amy. There'll be very little time.

AMY. There must be some time—Father has to give you long enough to look around—to make your arrangements——

(*BROCK shakes his head; in growing panic.*)

He can't humiliate you—turn you out of the house like a thief——

BROCK. I've got to go to-morrow.

AMY (*rises*). Not to-morrow, John, don't say to-morrow. (*To him.*) It couldn't be to-morrow.

BROCK (*taking her in his arms*). To-morrow morn-

ing, my darling, early to-morrow morning. This is the last chance we shall have to meet alone, perhaps for years. This is good-bye.

AMY (*faintly*). Good-bye!

(*They cling together as if they feared to be torn apart at any moment. Suddenly BROCK finds that AMY is inanimate in his arms.*)

BROCK (*frightened*). Amy! Amy! (*Louder.*) Amy! Amy! (*Calling.*) Cecil! Come here at once. Cecil!

(*He feels of her heart. A little reassured he lays her gently down on floor L. below armchair, putting cushion from chair under her head.*)

CECIL. Did you call?

BROCK (*kneeling beside AMY*). Yes.

CECIL (*startled*). What's up?

BROCK. She's fainted. Run and fetch Mrs. Wishaw. No one else, you understand?

CECIL (*going*). Right!

BROCK. Be quick!

(*Exit CECIL upper door L.*)

(*BROCK rises and fetches carafe of water from book-case. He wets his handkerchief and applies it to AMY's temples. She begins to revive.*)

AMY (*faintly*). What was it?

BROCK (*gently*). It's all right, my sweetheart.

(*Re-enter CECIL with BEATRICE upper door L. She has changed her evening dress for a tea gown.*)

BEATRICE (*anxiously*). What's happened?

BROCK. Your sister fainted. I was so frightened I sent for you. But she's come to now.

(*He rises, yielding his place to BEATRICE.*)

BEATRICE (*kneeling and supporting AMY, who has struggled to a kneeling position*). My Amy! Do you feel better now?

AMY. Bee! Everything faded all of a sudden.
(*Sits up.*)

BEATRICE. What made you faint?

BROCK. Don't ask her now.

BEATRICE. But what were you doing here?

BROCK. She'll tell you to-morrow.

AMY. To-morrow? What is it that's going to happen to-morrow?

BEATRICE. Don't try to remember now, darling. Bee's going to put you to bed. (*To BROCK as they get AMY to her feet.*) Will you help me to get her as far as her door?

BROCK. I think I'd better carry her to her room.
(*He picks AMY up in his arms and carries her out upper door L. to BEATRICE'S astonishment.*)

(*She is about to follow them out when she sees CECIL standing L. C. open mouthed.*)

BEATRICE (*coming quickly back to him, quietly*). Cecil, not a word of this to father.

CECIL (*indignantly*). What do you take me for? A sneak?

BEATRICE (*putting her hand on his shoulder*). I'm certain I can trust you.

CECIL (*mollified*). But I say, it does look jolly queer.

BEATRICE (*looking apprehensively after AMY, with a little catch in her voice*). Yes, it does look jolly queer.

(*She follows BROCK and AMY out, leaving CECIL standing there.*)

CURTAIN.

(*Plays about twenty-six minutes.*)

ACT III

SCENE.—BEATRICE WISHAW'S sitting-room.

See plan on opposite page.

An early Georgian boudoir furnished in gilt wicker-work of the period save for one or two upholstered pieces. On the R. a fireplace with a Flaxman chimney-piece of white marble. Over it a gilt mirror with candelabra. At back L. C. door A. opens on to a little corridor. At one end of this corridor, directly facing door A. is the door of Felix Fourié's bedroom. The corridor branches off R. into hall. Within the room, to L. of door A. arch B. opens on to the communicating bedroom. A glimpse of a richly-curtained four-poster, the edge of a dressing-table and a chair. On the L. a window, now curtained, overlooks the park. Facing window a table desk and a chair. Down L. front a little table with flowers and a low settee of gilt wickerwork. Down R. C. front an ottoman of old brocade. A screen of old needlework framed in gilt down in corner R. below mantel. A harp in corner above mantel. Facing the fire a sofa upholstered in brocade. An aubusson carpet of faded rose. Curtains of old pink brocade. On the walls some eighteenth century pastel portraits. A fire is burning and the lights are up in both rooms.

(At rise DORMAN can be seen in bedroom, fast asleep in dressing-table chair. Enter BEATRICE door A. She comes in thoughtfully, closes door A. and turns to bedroom. Seeing DORMAN asleep she pauses in

Arch B. smiling, then goes up, taps DORMAN on face, stands watching her.)

DORMAN¹ (*waking*). Oh! I beg pardon, I'm sure, ma'am—I'd almost dropped off. (*Rising.*) A thing I never do! (*Comes in arch B.*)

BEATRICE (*comes to back of W. TABLE*). That's all right, Dorman. But you needn't have waited.

DORMAN. I thought you might be requiring something else, ma'am.

BEATRICE. No.

(*DORMAN about to move.*)

Oh, yes. Fetch my other slippers, please. I'm not going to bed yet.

(*DORMAN returns to bedroom. BEATRICE comes down. Looking at a little jewelled clock which is on table desk L.*)

I'm afraid I kept you waiting very late for "Ledgers." It's nearly twelve.

DORMAN (*in bedroom*). Bless your heart, miss, I mean ma'am, that don't matter. I saw to her ladyship before ever I come to you, so there's no one been inconvenienced but me.

BEATRICE. I had to stay with Miss Amy a little. She'd actually fainted.

DORMAN (*coming in with a pair of fancy slippers*). Then that was why Master Cecil came to fetch you all of a fluster?

BEATRICE. Yes. (*Cross below DORMAN to fire.*) I'm very worried about my sister, Dorman. (*Leaves handkerchief on mantelpiece.*)

DORMAN (*placidly*). Are you, ma'am?

BEATRICE (*turning and facing DORMAN*). Dorman, you've known Miss Amy since she was a little girl. Don't you think she's changed greatly the last three years?

DORMAN (*non-committal*). Some might say she had and some might say she hadn't.

BEATRICE (*perturbed*). She seems frailer each time I see her, more nervous, more excitable. And then to-night—for no apparent reason—she suddenly faints. (*Goes to her.*) You're a sensible body, Dorman. How do you account for it?

DORMAN (*reticent*). Miss Amy's getting on.

BEATRICE. "On?" She's only twenty-four.

DORMAN. Twenty-four is "on." It's time Miss Amy was married.

BEATRICE (*taken aback. To audience*). Married? (*To DORMAN.*) Do you mean to some particular person? (*Sits.*)

DORMAN. No, ma'am, that don't matter. Any husband takes the nonsense out of us women.

BEATRICE (*shaking her head*). I've not much confidence in your remedy, Dorman. It's been known to fail. (*Sits on stool.*)

DORMAN (*kneeling before her and taking off her slippers*). So has most medicine.

BEATRICE (*smiling*). But——

DORMAN. That don't say we don't need it.

BEATRICE (*trying to stem the tide*). Really, Dorman, I——

DORMAN (*fairly started*). Lord, ma'am, now you've a husband of your own a little truth won't harm. And as my old father used to say "Good stock do get jumpy if it ain't paired."

BEATRICE. My slippers, Dorman.

DORMAN (*putting on one slipper; garrulously*). These times people hold back wedding-bells as if they was bolting horses. Why, at Miss Amy's age your lady mother had two bouncing babies to look after. Little time had she for nerves and vapours and such like!

BEATRICE. The other foot, Dorman.

DORMAN. They put marriage off too late nowadays, and that's a fact. Seems as though parents didn't trouble themselves any longer to find their daughters husbands—they simply leave it to Provi-

dence. As if marriage wasn't enough of a lottery already!

BEATRICE (*rises, crosses below DORMAN to settee L.C.*). Thank you, Dorman, that will do.

DORMAN (*going up, stops*). Shall you be requiring anything more, ma'am?

BEATRICE. Nothing, thanks. (*Sits on settee L. C.*)

(DORMAN *takes slippers into bedroom.*)

(*Picking up book off table L. C.*) I shall read a little before I go to bed.

DORMAN (*coming out of bedroom, goes down to R. of her*). Then good night, ma'am. And don't you worry about Miss Amy, ma'am. Find her a nice husband and you'll hear no more of fainting-fits—(*Goes up to door A.*) unless it's in a better cause.

BEATRICE. Good-night, Dorman.

(*Exit DORMAN door A.*)

(BEATRICE *waits until she is safely out, rises, puts down book and goes up into bedroom. She pulls down blind in bedroom. Then she goes to dressing-table, and gives a touch to her hair. Having turned out lights in bedroom, she returns to sitting-room, goes to window L., peers out into park, and draws the curtains a little closer. Crossing to fire, picks up wood, stops, listens, puts wood on fire, stops as a knock comes on door A. She gives a little sigh of relief and opens it. Enter PASCOE TANDRIDGE.*)

PASCOE. Am I late? (*Crosses below her to L.*) I was afraid to come before twelve.

BEATRICE (*leaning against the closed door*). I only got rid of Dorman a few moments ago. (*She is about to join him.*)

PASCOE (*standing below her*). Don't move! I want to look at you.

(*She keeps still, leaning against chair smiling.*)

How long is it ?

BEATRICE. Since you last saw me ?

PASCOE. Yes.

BEATRICE. Don't you know ?

PASCOE. Yes, but I want to see if you do.

BEATRICE. It's three months and three days.†

PASCOE. And then it was only at some horrible function where I had to murmur, "Isn't it going off well ?" When I wanted to say, (*Moves up a step.*) "My Beatrice—my darling—I love you still—I love you still."

BEATRICE. May I move yet ?

PASCOE (*gazing at her*). No.

BEATRICE (*remaining in the same position*). Were you pleased when I wrote you to meet me here ?

PASCOE. Pleased ! It inspired me. Wasn't the Frenchman a stroke of genius ?

BEATRICE. He was providential.

PASCOE. Your people can't possibly guess that our turning up at the same time was pre-arranged.

BEATRICE. Well. (*Comes down to R. of him, level with him*). Are you glad to see me ?

PASCOE. Don't ask me that ! I'm trying to keep my self-control.

BEATRICE (*coquetting*). You seem to be keeping it admirably.

PASCOE (*drawing her to him*). Beatrice ! (*He takes her in his arms and kisses her passionately.*)

BEATRICE (*yielding*). Pascoe !

PASCOE (*looking into her eyes, softly*). You've changed. It's the first time I've kissed you and you haven't struggled against me. What's happened ?

BEATRICE. I've come to a decision. Oh, I've so much to tell you, dear.

(*They come down L. together.*)

Come and sit beside me. (*Sits on settee.*)

PASCOE (*sitting beside her*). Beatrice, how wonderful it is to be with you !

BEATRICE. You're still of that mind?

PASCOE. If you ask me questions like that——

BEATRICE. I've got to make sure.

PASCOE. Haven't I loved you hopelessly for years? Is it likely I should change now?

BEATRICE. An idealistic love for a married woman is a pleasant incentive to a young author.

PASCOE. Careful, Bee. I don't feel patient this evening.

BEATRICE (*mischievously*). But who knows? If Laura had shown signs of yielding Petrarch might have been unexpectedly called away from Verona.

PASCOE (*rises, knee on settee, catching her by the shoulders*). Will you bolt with me?

BEATRICE (*looking straight at him*). Yes.

PASCOE. When?

BEATRICE. Whenever you like. (*Rises.*)

PASCOE. Whenever I like? Beatrice! (*Kisses her.*) What's done it? Nothing I was ever able to say could persuade you.

BEATRICE. No. Lionel's done it.

PASCOE. How? Has he been brutal?

BEATRICE. No.

PASCOE. Indifferent?

BEATRICE. He was always that.

PASCOE. You've found out?

BEATRICE. Things that make it impossible for me to even live in the same house with him.

PASCOE. Mrs. Sartoris?

BEATRICE. You knew?

PASCOE. Yes.

BEATRICE (*looks at him in surprise*). Yet you never urged that as a reason for me to leave him.

PASCOE. No.

BEATRICE. That was sporting of you, Pascoe. But was it fair to me?

PASCOE. It was selfish. I wanted you to come to me because you couldn't live without me. Not merely because you'd found your husband out.

BEATRICE. Oh, Pascoe, if father had only let us marry six years ago, or if I hadn't been so weak!

PASCOE. You weren't weak—you were dominated. I never blamed you. I understood.

BEATRICE. When father urged me to marry Lionel, I thought he must know best. Oh, I tried to do my duty. I tried conscientiously to love Lionel. (*Laughing ruefully, crosses down towards lower end of settee L.C.*) How my gawky attempts at wifely affection must have bored him!

PASCOE. Don't! Don't! (*Turns from her.*)

BEATRICE (*looking up at him.*) And then, as every hope of happiness with Lionel left me (*turns to him; puts arms around him*), you crept back into my empty heart, you, my first love, my one love. Your caring was all I had, it was my secret treasure. I thought of you so constantly that when I used actually to meet you it was startling.

PASCOE. Weren't you glad to see me, then?

BEATRICE. You were my one comfort—and my great trial.

PASCOE (*taking her in his arms*). And you, do you know how you've haunted me? Do you know all the frantic ways I've tried to forget you? I've been ascetic; I've run riot; I've travelled half over the world; I've made love to other women to forget you. And I can't, nothing will drive you out of my heart; I come back to England just for the pain of being under the same grey sky with you and letting the ache and the longing grow a little worse. I'd barter my fame, my future, my life, to have you for my own, to hold you in my arms, to lay my head upon your breast. I love you.

BEATRICE (*looks up at him. Softly, laying her hand on his*). Pascoe, I've been cruel to you.

PASCOE. No, no, that's all forgotten. (*Anxiously—childishly.*) For you're mine, now, aren't you?

BEATRICE. I—

PASCOE (*putting his hand on her lips*). Oh, don't

unsay the words that have made me so happy. It's true?—it's not a dream?—Will you come with me to-morrow? Early?

BEATRICE. Yes.

PASCOE (*takes both her hands*). Where shall I take you first, Beatrice? To Venice? To Egypt?

BEATRICE. Take me into your everyday life—that's where I want to go.

PASCOE. My darling! (*Eagerly*.) Where shall we meet? London? We can't leave "Ledgers" together.

BEATRICE (*considering*). Why not?

PASCOE. They'll expect you to start off from here in the motor.

BEATRICE. So I will. (*To him*.) But I can offer to drive you as far as the station. There, instead of bidding you good-bye, I'll jump out, send the motor speeding back to Bellingham Park——

PASCOE. While you go on to London with me!

BEATRICE. Oh, Pascoe, I haven't a misgiving left in me. I didn't know scruples were such a weight. I feel like a tramp who's cast aside all superfluous luggage.

PASCOE (*holding her at arm's length*). My gorgeous tramp! How you've run riot in furbelows these four years. Any one could have told the Honourable Mrs. Wishaw was unhappy.

BEATRICE (*startled*). How?

PASCOE. You held orgies of embroidery. You tumbled in hats. When men are wretched they take to drink. Unhappy women take to dress.

BEATRICE. If that's infallible I shall only need one plain alpaca a year now.

PASCOE. I hope alpaca's serviceable?

BEATRICE. Why? Are you going to warn me that you're only a poor devil of an author?

PASCOE. No.

BEATRICE. That's right.

PASCOE. But I'm going to ask you an important

question. Has Wishaw any suspicion of what you mean to do?

BEATRICE. Not the slightest. Nor has Mrs. Sartoris—which is much more important. (*Goes down to stool.*)

PASCOE. There's no doubt but what he'll divorce you?

BEATRICE. A great deal. He can't marry her or he wouldn't have married me.

PASCOE. (*perturbed, walking about*). Beatrice, do you realize what it means for you if he doesn't divorce you?

BEATRICE (*is sitting on stool down R. C.*). Now you're going to lecture me.

PASCOE. I must.

BEATRICE. Then I shall turn my back on you. (*Turns face R.*)

PASCOE. Do. (*Goes to back of her.*) I can keep my nerve much better if I don't see your eyes.

BEATRICE (*looks up at him*). This position has other advantages.

PASCOE. What?

BEATRICE. Your arguments will go over my head.

PASCOE. I must make you see that the bargain you're making is all in my favour. Were I a diplomatist, a doctor, a politician, we could be comfortably wrecked together. But I'm in one of the few careers in England that can't be blighted by talk. On the contrary! The worse the notoriety the happier the publishers. Old maids will rush for my last novel. A really shocking scandal would send me into a tenth edition!

BEATRICE (*turns face from up stage*). You don't know how you relieve my mind. The one thing that could have stopped me was the possibility of hurting your career.

PASCOE (*to her*). Beatrice!

BEATRICE. As for my people I scarcely exist for

them now. (*Half to herself.*) I'm married and done for.

PASCOE. Still, your mother will feel this.

BEATRICE. Mother'll be shocked. (*Turns to him.*) My conduct will be incomprehensible to her. She'll class me with a trusted family servant of ours who stole a gold watch.

PASCOE. And the boys?

BEATRICE. At first they'll be vaguely resentful. They'll be forbidden to mention my name, so they'll talk of me sometimes in whispers. But they'll soon forget me.

PASCOE (*goes to her*). How about Amy?

BEATRICE. Poor little Amy! She'll cry—yes, she'll wake up in the night and cry, and think me dreadfully wicked. But some day, when she's lived longer, she and I will meet and talk things over and she'll understand.

PASCOE (*with a sigh of relief*). Then the lecture is at an end. I see that it's impossible to convince you that you're about to take a singularly foolish step. (*He turns her face up to him, kisses her.*)

BEATRICE. How is it you haven't mentioned father?

PASCOE (*hard*). Because it's his fault. (*Step away*), I'm not even sorry for him.

BEATRICE. Yet he's the one who'll feel this the most.

PASCOE. And he's the one human being who could stop you.

BEATRICE. Do you think I'm *afraid* of father now? (*Rises.*)

PASCOE. I didn't mean through fear, through your heart.

BEATRICE. He's never attempted to reach it.

PASCOE. Why should he? You were a part of his property—a marriageable daughter.

BEATRICE. We might have been such pals, father and I, that's the pity of it. Even now I have the

most singular feeling for him. It's vital, I seem literally to feel his blood flowing in my veins. There's nothing I couldn't have done for him if he'd only understood me—if he'd only once met me face to face as another human being.

PASCOE (*panic-stricken, to her*). Promise (*takes her hands*) he shan't rob me of you a second time.

BEATRICE (*turns to him*). Aren't you foolish! You know he won't find it out until too late.

PASCOE. Then you're determined to throw yourself away on me?

BEATRICE. Quite.

PASCOE. I swear you'll never regret it! Whatever you may wish, whatever you ask of me from now on shall be done blindly.

BEATRICE (*teasing*). Suppose I asked you to give me up?

PASCOE (*hesitatingly*). I—I'd do it.

BEATRICE (*half jestingly*). Honour?

PASCOE. Yes, honour.

BEATRICE. Is it likely I should ask you that? Here is my one hope of happiness! (*In his arms.*)

PASCOE. And mine, Beatrice—and mine! (*Kisses her.*)

(*A pause.*)

BEATRICE (*drawing gently away*). You must go now.

PASCOE. Don't send me away yet.

BEATRICE. It's late.

PASCOE (*holding her*). I can't leave you.

BEATRICE. No, no, I'll go with you boldly, Pascoe, and face the world, but I won't sneak. (*Goes up stage by armchair L. of fire.*)

PASCOE. You're right

BEATRICE. Just now you promised to do blindly whatever I asked of you.

PASCOE. I meant it.

BEATRICE. Then go now.

PASCOE. Very well, I will. (*Goes up, stops.*)

(*A knock door A.*)

What's that?

BEATRICE (*up to level with him*). I don't know.

PASCOE. Your father?

(*Knock repeated softly*)

BEATRICE (*relieved*). No. It's Amy. I know her knock. (*Goes up.*)

PASCOE (*goes towards bedroom.*) Shall I go in here?

BEATRICE. No. Why should you hide? I'll open the door.

(*She opens door A. AMY, looking pale and ill, comes in. She is wearing a kimono.*)

AMY (*wildly to BEATRICE*). Bee! I can't get to sleep! I thought you might be awake still and that I — (*Seeing PASCOE.*) Oh!

BEATRICE (*putting her arm round AMY*). It's all right, dear. It's only Pascoe.

AMY (*drawing her kimono closer*). Oh! I didn't think there'd be any one with you so late——

BEATRICE. Pascoe and I had something to tell each other.

PASCOE. So I forced myself in here. It was my fault. (*Taking AMY's reluctant hand.*) Remember that. My fault. Good night.

AMY (*wonderingly*). Crosses below PASCOE to settee L. C.). Good night.

PASCOE (*looking at BEATRICE, but not touching her*). Until to-morrow?

BEATRICE. To-day! "To-morrow" has begun.

(*Exit PASCOE door A. He closes door.*)

(*Goes down to Amy*). What's the matter? When I left you were dozing off.

(*They sit on settee.*)

Couldn't you sleep, dearest?

AMY. I think I did a little. Then I woke up and remembered. (*Breaking down.*) Bee! I'm so unhappy!

BEATRICE (*drawing her into her arms and rocking her*). Tell Bee—tell Bee all about it—just as you used to when you were a funny little girl and got into funny little scrapes. Is this a scrape?

AMY (*from BEATRICE's shoulder*). Oh, a big, big scrape.

BEATRICE. You're in love with John Brock.

AMY (*sitting up, surprised*). How did you know?

BEATRICE. Silly child!

AMY. Bee! Don't say you're against me too!

BEATRICE. I? Against you? Never!

AMY. Then you do like him?

BEATRICE. Yes, indeed! He's a friend of Pascoe's. Pascoe was telling me to-night at dinner what a fine chap Brock is.

AMY. That was kind of Pascoe! Although it's true. And isn't John handsome?

BEATRICE. Does he love you too?

AMY. Of course. He's perfect!

BEATRICE (*smiling at her answers*). No money, naturally.

AMY. Not a penny..

BEATRICE. What a pity. Father'd snap at a prosperous son-in-law; he likes his daughters to marry "well."

AMY. We knew he'd never consent. But somehow I believed a miracle would happen for us. I've been living in a dream.

BEATRICE. No, you've been in love, that's all.

AMY. Now I'm awake and John is to be taken from me.

BEATRICE (*rises*). What?

AMY. To-morrow! He's being sent away. (*Comes to BEATRICE, slipping down on her knees and hiding*

her face on BEATRICE'S lap). What shall I do, Bee? What shall I do?

BEATRICE. Do? Marry him now. Go with him. Face the future together—

AMY (*looking up*). But——

BEATRICE. Don't hesitate! Oh, Amy, love as it first comes to us, is so radiant, so untouched, so holy—you'll never feel quite the same for each other again—I don't want you to lose the most beautiful thing in life.

AMY. But I can't marry him now. Father won't let me.

BEATRICE. Do you imagine he'll *ever* let you?

AMY. If John gets on——

BEATRICE. Do you suppose Father's going to wait for that? Do you know what his next move will be? He'll marry you safely off to the first unsuitable person he can find.

AMY (*goes up C.*). He shan't! He shan't!

BEATRICE. If father has the power to separate you from the man you love he can make you do anything!

AMY (*turns to BEATRICE*). Not that, not that!

BEATRICE (*comes to her*). Amy, listen to me while there's still time. You're a girl and I'm a woman. And as I love you I tell you that the most horrible thing that can happen to a woman is to belong to one man when she loves another.

AMY. Beatrice, I'll never——

BEATRICE. Had I known what I know now five years ago, no power on earth would have driven me to the altar with Lionel Wishaw. You shan't go through what I have—you shan't *come to* what I have—if you'll listen to me.

AMY. I will, Bee. I promise you I won't marry any one else on my sacred word of honour.

BEATRICE. Then marry the man you love!

AMY. But how should we live, Bee—he couldn't stay on at the school—or take me to the West Coast——

BEATRICE (*crosses below her to R. of her*). I'll get Lionel to put him into something. (*Remembering*). No, I can't do that now. But there is a way and I shall find it.

AMY (*rises*). You don't understand.

BEATRICE. It's you who don't understand. (*Taking her by the shoulders*). You're twenty-four years of age, and you're going to let happiness slip through your fingers—not because you're afraid of poverty—or rough luck—or anything like that, but simply because you're *afraid of father*.

AMY (*capitulating*). It's true, Bee, it's true. I can't face father in one of his tempers. When he looks at me crossly—when he shouts at me—I get cold all over and begin to tremble. I can't help it. (*Collapses on settee L. C.*)

BEATRICE (*impatiently*). Oh! And he counts on it. (*Crosses R.*)

AMY. I shall never forget, when I was about twelve—and I went to tea with the little French girl he'd forbidden me to know, when I came back—his face as he struck me—(*Shudders*.)

BEATRICE (*goes C.*). You were a child then!

AMY. It was the same three years ago when I wanted to be a hospital nurse (*Crouches on settee*).—the things he said! The way he shouted at me and banged his fist down!

BEATRICE (*indignant. Crosses L. to settee*). It's bullying—it's the lowest kind of tyranny! And it succeeds! You submit! Rather than risk arousing his temper you'll grow into a disappointed spinster without a tie or an aim in life! Oh, I'll speak to father! I'm not afraid of him any more. (*Goes up a little*.)

AMY (*frightened. Rises, goes to her L. of her*). No, no, Bee, you mustn't! Think how angry he'd be with you! He might even—

(*Door A. is suddenly thrown open and SIR EVERARD*

stands on the threshold. He wears a tweed coat over his dress-suit.)

AMY (*panic-stricken*). Father!

BEATRICE (*putting her arm round AMY*). You might have knocked, father. This is my room.

SIR EVERARD (*to AMY*). So you're here, are you? As I came back from the stable I saw your lights. I went to your room—it was empty. (*He comes down.*)

AMY. I couldn't sleep—I came to Bee.

SIR EVERARD. I thought perhaps you'd gone to your lover.

BEATRICE (*seeing AMY wince*). Father!

SIR EVERARD. What am I to believe when my daughter becomes secretly engaged under my very roof!

AMY (*hiding her face on BEATRICE'S shoulder*). I told Bee.

SIR EVERARD. I see. You can confide in your sister. She knows your secrets, eh? But your parents are kept in the dark.

AMY (*sobbing*). I couldn't tell mother—she'd have told you.

SIR EVERARD (*infuriated*). And so for a whole year you carry on with your brother's tutor behind my back!

BEATRICE (*trying to get AMY away*). Go to your room, Amy. Leave me with father.

SIR EVERARD (*striding between BEATRICE and AMY—loudly*). One moment! (*Cross below BEATRICE.*)

(AMY *backs from SIR EVERARD to L. C.*)

BEATRICE (*goes up, closes door. Quietly*). Monsieur Fourié is only across the corridor, father. He'll hear you.

SIR EVERARD (*ignoring BEATRICE, but lowering his voice*). Damn Fourié! Listen! In future I shall take care to know what goes on in my house. There'll

be no more John Brocks I promise you. I forbid you—I absolutely forbid you to ever see him or communicate with him again, do you hear?

AMY. You can send him away, you can keep me from seeing him, but you can't make me forget him—*(Turns above settee.)* you can't—you can't!

BEATRICE. Father, let Amy go. Don't you see—she's on the verge of hysterics.

SIR EVERARD *(turning on BEATRICE, which gives AMY a chance to reach door A.)* What business is this of yours? Have you been encouraging her in this ridiculous infatuation?

AMY *(at door A. with the courage of utter despair.)* It's not Bee's fault. She knew nothing of it until to-night. It's my fault! All my fault! And I don't care if you kill me for it. You've left me nothing to live for.

(She gropes her way, blinded by her tears, BEATRICE helps her out.)

(With relief BEATRICE closes door A. after her and stands against it.)

SIR EVERARD *(coldly)*. Why did you interfere?

BEATRICE. How could I help it! It was cowardly of you to attack a nervous, overwrought, hysterical girl!

SIR EVERARD *(sarcastically)*. I regret that my manner of conducting my affairs does not meet with your approval. There's no more to be said. Except good night.

BEATRICE. Please listen, father. I want to tell you something you don't know.

SIR EVERARD. There seems to be a great deal my children think I don't know.

BEATRICE *(comes a little down on SIR EVERARD'S right)*. I assure you that Amy is ill. She actually fainted this evening.

SIR EVERARD. Is it my fault if she's worked herself up into such a state? Is it my fault if she's chosen

to fall in love with a man who can't afford to keep a wife?

BEATRICE. Perhaps not. (*Coming down to him.*) But it's your fault that she's morbidly afraid of you—that she's lost all will power of her own.

SIR EVERARD. This is the first time I've heard it was morbid to have some respect for your father's wishes.

BEATRICE. It's not respect that makes Amy obey you, but fear, blind fear. Is that the sort of obedience you care to exact?

SIR EVERARD. I don't care how I exact it—I mean to be master in my own house.

BEATRICE. At the price of your daughter's happiness—her health—her sanity even?

SIR EVERARD. Pshaw! Since the world began women who couldn't get their own way have fallen back on fainting fits.

BEATRICE (*angry. Turns away from him. Goes to fire screen*). Oh! How can you be so unfair—so dense—about your own child?

SIR EVERARD. Having been away from home for four years you naturally see things more clearly than I do. Perhaps you'd like to come here and take up the management of the estate.

BEATRICE (*by fire*). Your sarcasm is wasted on me, father. I understand Amy better than you do simply because I've tried to. And that's a compliment you've never paid a woman.

SIR EVERARD. I don't attempt the impossible. (*Rises, goes to her.*) Now look here, Beatrice, up to the present you and I have got on well. You've always fallen in with my views. I shouldn't like to think badly of you now. So let's drop it. Your father's house is always open to you, but you come here nowadays as an outsider.

BEATRICE. That's true. But I love my sister, I must speak for her. I must try to make you realize her character. She's not of the stuff of which the

splendid spinsters are made. She's weak and idealistic and emotional.

SIR EVERARD (C.). A girl's one chance of happiness doesn't consist in marrying the first man she's love-sick over! (*Goes C.*)

BEATRICE (*gladly; hopefully. Going to him. Hand on his arm*). Oh! Is that your only objection? Consent to a long engagement. Put Amy to the test. If you separate these two young people, you're thwarting nature.

SIR EVERARD. I have no respect for nature as a matrimonial agent.

(*BEATRICE crosses to fire. SIR EVERARD moves up.*)

You talk to me as if I proposed to lock her in a tower and keep her on bread and water. This is the twentieth century. (*He goes to her a step.*) Amy's of age, I've no legal rights over her. What's to prevent her from walking out the front door with this young man?

BEATRICE. Something much stronger than bolts and bars. The habit of giving in to you for twenty-four years.

SIR EVERARD. So much the better if it saves her from marrying a pauper. (*Crosses to settee.*)

BEATRICE (*stepping between him and door*). But what's to become of Amy? You wouldn't allow her to have a profession—you won't let her marry the man of her choice. What's to be her future?

SIR EVERARD. If she can't marry suitably she can stay with her parents.

BEATRICE. Suppose she survives you? What then? Everard won't want her here.

SIR EVERARD. Certainly not. When I die she'll be provided for.

BEATRICE. Then if she doesn't make a fine match she's condemned to be an old maid?

SIR EVERARD. What of that? Not so long ago it was an understood thing in good families that one

of the girls remained unmarried to take care of her parents when they became infirm.

BEATRICE (*with a point of malice*). Like Aunt Agatha?

SIR EVERARD (*annoyed*). Your Aunt intended to marry. As a girl she had several offers.

BEATRICE. And did her father keep her from taking them?

SIR EVERARD (*furious*). No, he did not! (*Walking about.*) If Agatha's a dependent and a charge on me now it's because she was too finniky in her youth. At some time or other every woman has a chance.

BEATRICE. That's true! And this is Amy's chance, and I'm asking you to give it her!

SIR EVERARD. I wonder I've listened to you. (*Moving up.*) Nowadays you're each of you scampering after your own private happiness without a thought of your duty to the family.

BEATRICE. Our duty to the family being blind submission to the head of it, eh, father?

SIR EVERARD (*exasperated*). I've been too patient. To let myself be cross-examined by my own daughter. (*Strides to the door.*)

BEATRICE. One moment!

(*He stops, she goes to him. He pauses, unwillingly compelled by the intensity of her manner. She goes slowly to him and puts a hand on each shoulder.*)

(*Quietly.*) (C.) Father—do you love me?

SIR EVERARD (*alarmed. c.*). What do you mean?

BEATRICE. I mean, have you a real feeling for me in your heart?

SIR EVERARD (*uncomfortable. Apologetically*). Of course I—I naturally have a feeling for you.

BEATRICE (*crosses to SIR EVERARD, hands on shoulders*). Then by that feeling, I beg of you, I implore you, for my sake—give Amy and Brock just one chance.

SIR EVERARD (*drawing roughly away from her, goes*

away down L. C.). I know there was something behind this display of affection.

BEATRICE (*exasperated*). Then you won't relent? That's final? Amy can starve for love or be served as I was?

SIR EVERARD. Why? (*Pausing*.) What have you to complain of? You made a good match! It's proved suitable in every way.

BEATRICE. Suitable! Did you think it suitable to give your young daughter to the lover of Mrs. Sartoris?

SIR EVERARD (*perturbed. Coming to her*). Is there trouble between you and your husband.

BEATRICE. Tell me the truth. When you married me to Lionel Wishaw did you *know*?

SIR EVERARD (*evasively*). I certainly had heard their names connected,

(*She turns away from him.*)

but I took Lionel's word that there would be no further cause for gossip.

BEATRICE (*turns to him—incredulous*). So you did do it willingly?

SIR EVERARD. Did what?

BEATRICE (*goes to him c.*). You made me a wife without a chance! It fitted in with your plans, so you gave me, a romantic, foolish girl whom you knew to be in love with another man, to a husband who had a notorious passion for another woman. What a marriage! (*Cross to fire.*)

SIR EVERARD (*on the defensive*). Most men have such episodes in their lives. A tactful woman overlooks them.

BEATRICE (*sits on stool*). You didn't bring me up with those ideas.

SIR EVERARD (*comes to her*). One can't tell a girl such things.

BEATRICE. For five years I've sat at my own table a cipher—a nobody—an overlooked fool——

SIR EVERARD. You've waited a long time to make these complaints.

BEATRICE. I tried to make the best of it. I tried to please my husband; I even tried to please his mistress—until, quite lately, I found out why Lionel married me.

SIR EVERARD. He thought you'd make him an ideal wife—he told me so at the time.

BEATRICE (*faces him*). He married me because *her* husband was getting suspicious; he married me to silence gossip.

SIR EVERARD. What?

BEATRICE. She thought a daughter of yours would be ideal—meek and orthodox and guaranteed to look well on a platform. She picked me out for the constituents! (*Rises and goes up C.*)

SIR EVERARD (*shocked. To her*). Are you sure of this?

BEATRICE (*turns to him*). Perhaps you'll admit now that my marriage was a ghastly mistake!

SIR EVERARD (*much perturbed. Goes to her*). I can understand your being shocked and pained at this discovery, Beatrice. But we must go slow—we mustn't do anything rash.

BEATRICE (*mockingly*). Father, you're wonderful.

SIR EVERARD. I'll see Lionel at once.

BEATRICE. Spare yourself the trouble, I'm going to leave him. (*Moves from him; down to stool R.*)

SIR EVERARD (*not relishing the prospect. Down to her*). You mean to come home again?

BEATRICE. No, father, don't worry. (*Comes below stool.*)

SIR EVERARD (*with forced playfulness*). Come, come, this won't do, my dear. Temper, eh? And jealousy? Now let you and I sit down and talk this over calmly and coolly.

(*He motions her to ottoman. She sits, grimly amused at his efforts. He draws the desk chair to C. and sits close to her. Putting his hand on her knee.*)

My dear Bee, if you leave your husband you'll put yourself morally and legally in the wrong.

BEATRICE. Legally, yes. Morally depends.

SIR EVERARD. Under any circumstances a wife is a wife.

BEATRICE. Lionel only wants me near him at election times. We long ago discarded our parody of love.

SIR EVERARD. I feel confident that I can bring Wishaw back to a sense of his duty towards you.

BEATRICE. You couldn't. Nothing could—not even an act of parliament. He knows too much about them.

SIR EVERARD. I understand how you feel at present. You're hot-headed, Beatrice. You come by it honestly. I've a bad temper myself, it's soon over, but while it lasts I—I could do anything.

BEATRICE. I inherit something beside temper from you, father. Obstinacy. (*Rises.*)

SIR EVERARD. Come, come—give yourself time to cool down.

BEATRICE. No. I've decided to leave my husband for ever! (*Rising.*) I didn't intend you to know this until afterwards. I've told you for Amy's sake. You separated me from the man I loved as a girl. See what comes of it. (*Crosses to settee L. C.*)

SIR EVERARD (*goes toward her*). Your case and Amy's are quite different. She'd never dream of taking as mad a step as the one you're contemplating.

BEATRICE. How do you know? Would you have thought me capable of what I've decided to do?

SIR EVERARD (*irritably, crosses above her to L. of writing table*). I'll have Keeling over. He's a diplomatic fellow. He shall talk to you.

BEATRICE (*throwing herself carelessly on settee L.; her arms behind her head*). I wonder how he'll charge you for it? "To trying to persuade Mrs. Wishaw to resume her matrimonial shackles—six and eight."

SIR EVERARD (*banging his fist down on desk*).

You'll regret not heeding me some day! (*Then behind her and forcing himself to be conciliatory.*) Come now, say you'll think it over. Don't go away outright. Why not visit us for a little instead, eh?

BEATRICE (*looking up at him; mockingly*). You told me to-night that I was an outsider here.

SIR EVERARD (*spluttering*). An outsider—an outsider merely, because you've a home of your own now—that was all I meant. Nothing can alter the fact that you're my daughter. Your conduct might have the most far-reaching consequences. It might even affect Everard's future. (*Sits in chair L. of settee.*)

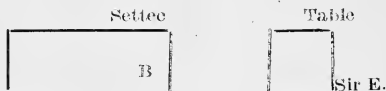
BEATRICE (*leaning over table and facing him*). Now we're coming to it. Everard's future!

SIR EVERARD. Suppose you leave Wishaw recklessly like this—who's to know you're in the right? You'll be talked about, compromised. Old Hazelton won't dream of letting his girl marry Everard if you were the notorious Mrs. Wishaw, who'd left her husband and God knows what!

BEATRICE. So you propose to sacrifice me a second time to your idol?

SIR EVERARD. What d'you mean?

BEATRICE. Your idol, the monstrous family idol to which we must all bow down and worship—the son and heir.



SIR EVERARD. What are you talking about?

BEATRICE (*facing him across table*). Do you ever admit to yourself the real reason why your daughters have got to make good matches? I'll tell you. It's so that they'll never come to you for help. You'd marry us to monsters rather than spare a penny of the money that's destined for your idol!

SIR EVERARD (*furiously*). How dare you! (*Banging table*). What have you to complain of?

BEATRICE. I complain that you don't consider us your equals or your son's. I complain that my sister and I are little more than servants in your eyes, to be clothed and fed and dismissed to our husbands with good characters. What affection have you shown us? I could have done anything for you if you'd only loved me a little! If you'd ever once met me face to face—but I've always appealed to you in vain. When I was a little girl and came crying to you about my sick terrier you only said it must be shot—that I wasn't to bother you—you were busy with Everard. And now that I've come to you about Amy, it's the same thing. You're busy with Everard.

SIR EVERARD (*bangs table*). Amy! Back it comes to Amy! That's your grievance. (*Rises, crosses to fire.*) All the rest is trumped-up sentiment to move me. As if you could! Least of all by dragging in my love for my boy!

BEATRICE (*rises, following him c.*). You think that unassailable! Natural, unselfish, above criticism! Well, I tell you your love for your eldest son is only a glorified form of selfishness. He's more than your flesh and blood, he's your name, your title, your successor, the father of your grandchildren—he's your mortgage on eternity, a finger you point at the world after death!

SIR EVERARD. Stop! I forbid you to say another word! (*Goes to her.*) You vixen! Upon my soul, I believe you hate me!

BEATRICE. Haven't you done your best to make me? Look at your cruelty to Amy. Look how you ignore my mother. Look how you treated me! All the love we could have had for you, you've thrown away. You've driven me to this: I'm not going away alone—I'm going with a man.

SIR EVERARD (*steps back from her*). You wanton!

BEATRICE. Now you know and you can't stop me. (*Goes down L. and then up stage.*)

SIR EVERARD (*at his wits' end*). Beatrice, I beg of you, I implore you—I, your father, beg you not to do this thing!

BEATRICE (*from above him*). When I begged for Amy you wouldn't listen to me.

SIR EVERARD. You're mad. You will disgrace us all—have some pity—

BEATRICE. No, no, you've had none on me! I am glad, glad, glad, glad, that I can hurt you, that I can avenge my mother and sister. If it keeps Everard from making the match you have planned, I shall be happy. I want to see you wince as you will wince. I want you to know that when my motor is announced to-morrow morning, that it is the signal. It's all been pre-arranged, and you won't be able to stop me. You won't be able to stop me! I am going to bolt with the man I love—the man you took from me—with Pascoe Tandridge!

SIR EVERARD. My God, I'll kill you first.

(*Warn Curtain.*)

BEATRICE (*seeing that he has completely lost control of himself*). Father! (*She tries to get to the door.*) Father!

SIR EVERARD (*between her and the door*). I'll kill you now.

(*He forces her down on her knees L. C. and seizes her by the throat as if to strangle her. She gives two piercing shrieks of fear.*)

BEATRICE. Help! Help!

(*Her screams arrest him. His hands drop. He stares at her stupidly and passes his hands over his forehead like a man coming out of a trance. She stays where he has left her, motionless, staring at him, fearing more for what he was about to become than for herself.*)

(*Then comes a hurried knocking door A.*)

SIR EVERARD (*whispering*). What's that ?

BEATRICE (*whispering*). I don't know.

FELIX (*outside the door, knocking*). I heard a cry for help. What is the matter ? Can I be of any assistance ?

BEATRICE (*to SIR EVERARD*). It's the **F**renchman !

SIR EVERARD. What'll he think ?

(*They whisper like two conspirators against a common enemy*).

FELIX (*outside*). I heard a cry. Is some one ill ? Shall I call the household ?

BEATRICE. I'll have to open it.

SIR EVERARD. Yes. He mustn't know.

BEATRICE. (*with a nervous shiver*). He shan't.

(SIR EVERARD crosses towards window L. She pulls herself up, goes reluctantly to the door and throws it open. FELIX, wrapped in an overcoat, stands there.)

FELIX (*anxiously*). My dear Mrs. Wishaw ! You are all right ?

BEATRICE (*with apparent wonder*). Yes.

FELIX. I heard a scream from this room.

SIR EVERARD (*coming into his line of vision ; immaculate in his dress suit ; imperturbable in his manner*). My dear Fourié——

FELIX. Sir Everard !

SIR EVERARD. No one has been here this last hour but my daughter and myself.

FELIX. So—you have been sitting up talking, you two.

(BEATRICE *nods*.)

It is not often you have your eldest beautiful daughter at home. (*Looking around, suspiciously*). Still, it is strange. I was just dozing off when I heard a woman's voice—screaming twice for help——Oh ! frightened.

BEATRICE. There is a grey lady supposed to haunt the room you're sleeping in, but I never heard of her screaming before. (*Goes to fire.*)

FELIX (*beginning to wonder if he didn't imagine it*). Oh! A grey lady! It is strange. I must apologise for so absurdly disturbing you. (*About to go.*)

SIR EVERARD. Not at all, my dear Fourié.

(FELIX stops.)

Very gallant of you to fly to the rescue of a damsel in distress—even if she was only a ghost. Or a nightmare, eh, Fourié? (*Looking at his watch.*) Bless me, it's ten to one, I must let you get to bed, Bee. Good-night, my dear.

(*He kisses her on the forehead; she submitting automatically to his kiss: neither of them look at each other.*)

BEATRICE. Good-night, father. Good-night again, Monsieur Fourié.

FELIX. Good-night, Mrs. Wishaw. A thousand excuses! I will not try to dream any more.

(*He bows and follows SIR EVERARD into the corridor.*)

(BEATRICE closes the door on them.)

SIR EVERARD (*heard outside saying jovially*). Sleep well, my dear fellow! No more visits from the grey lady.

FELIX (*murmurs*). Ah no, it was foolish of me.

(*The voices grow fainter and die out. A door slams, then another, far off. BEATRICE locks her door and listens. There is silence in the house. BEATRICE leans against the door. Worn out with strain and emotion she begins to cry.*)

CURTAIN.

Plays about 28 minutes.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*The Dining-room.*

See plan on opposite page.

(An Adams' room with white plaster walls and mahogany doors. On the L. double doors lead to hall. At back R. a long Adams' sideboard. L. a service table. On the R. a circular window, with a glass door R. leading on to a stone terrace. A glimpse of the garden beyond.)

(A long table is set in the centre of room. It is laid for breakfast. At the R. end of SIR EVERARD'S chair, at the L. end LADY CHILWORTH'S. There are four chairs on the upper side of table, facing the audience, two on the lower, with their backs to audience. On the sideboard is a long array of covered dishes set over spirit lamps, and joints of cold meat. Coffee, boiling water, etc., are on the service table.)

(As the curtain rises the breakfast gong is sounded outside. Discovered at rise empty. Everything in readiness for breakfast. Windows open. Enter FELIX door L. He has a bad cold in his head and looks pale and miserable. Having ascertained that he is alone in the room, he crosses to R. and closes the window. Then goes to sideboard, peers curiously under the covered dishes, but shudders at the cold meat and turns away. Enter PASCOE.)

FELIX *(with a sad imitation of a jocular English manner)*. Hello, Pascoe, you here?

PASCOE. Hello, Felix! Ready for breakfast?
(*Goes to sideboard and looks under covers.*)

FELIX. Um, I am fairly ready, but the servants are not at all.

PASCOE. Oh, you don't get any servants this meal.

FELIX (*astonished*). Why not?

PASCOE (*helping himself at sideboard*). I don't know. It's a custom in good families. If you can only afford to keep one servant she waits on you at breakfast, but if you keep a large staff you have to wait on yourself.

FELIX (*wearily*). I wish I was visiting poor people this morning. (*Sits chair 1.*)

PASCOE. You don't like the system? (*Comes down with plate L. of FELIX.*)

FELIX. Breakfast is the time I do not feel like working.

PASCOE. What's the matter? You seem very sorry for yourself.

FELIX (*sneezing*). I have caught a slight cold.

PASCOE (*placing the plate he had prepared for himself in front of FELIX*). Here, have some ham and eggs.

FELIX (*pushing it away*). Oh, ham and eggs do not speak to me this morning.

(PASCOE takes plate, puts it in his place—No. 4.)

When there are no servants is there no coffee either?

PASCOE. Plenty of coffee. I'll give you some.
(*Standing by LADY CHILWORTH'S place he pours coffee.*)

(FELIX sneezes.)

Where did you manage to catch such a cold?

FELIX (*shrugging his shoulders*). Oh, the Lord alone knows. It could have been anywhere here—this house is not particular. (*As PASCOE hands him coffee*) Thank you, my friend.

PASCOE (*pouring his own coffee*). You do look washed out. Didn't you sleep?

FELIX. I heard horrible clocks striking every

hour until daylight. Then I had just fallen into the most beautiful sleep when I was roughly awakened by a red-haired footman holding a boiling cup of tea at my throat.

PASCOE (*sitting chair 4*). Poor old man! What made you so restless?

FELIX. I had an adventure in the night.

PASCOE (*puzzled*). An adventure in the night?

FELIX (*bitterly*). Oh, not that kind of adventure. Nothing pleasant. Nothing to compromise your friends.

PASCOE. What was it?

FELIX. Imagine to yourself, I went to bed and was just dozing off when suddenly I heard two shrieks, two piercing shrieks coming, as I thought, from the room opposite mine.

PASCOE. But that's Mrs. Wishaw's room. (*Stops eating and listens attentively.*)

FELIX. I knew as much. I had seen her adorable boots at the door. So you can imagine that when I heard cries for help coming from her room, I lost no time. In a second I had bounded out of bed, slipped on the first decent garments to be had in the dark and dashed across the corridor.

PASCOE (*perturbed*). Well?

FELIX. Well, with the awful cries ringing in my ears still I have the discretion to knock. The door is opened by Mrs. Wishaw smiling, pleasant, not a hair out of place, in a very becoming tea-gown.

PASCOE. Then——

FELIX. And her father! Also smiling, pleasant, in evening dress.

PASCOE (*perturbed—rises*). Her father! Her father was there with her!

FELIX. They had been sitting there amiably chatting of family matters. A pretty domestic picture—just like one in your Royal Academy. (*Drinks.*)

PASCOE. Was it late?

FELIX. Neafly two o'clock. They had forgotten the time.

PASCOE (*goes to him back of the chairs*). But the screams?

FELIX. There were no screams. They gave me politely to understand that I was either mad or had eaten too much.

PASCOE. What happened then?

FELIX. I felt a fool. Sir Everard kissed his daughter on the forehead, and she told me there was a ghost in my room.

PASCOE. Did she indeed?

FELIX (*groaning*). I might have slept if I had not known it. I might have slept a wink! But to lie awake in a cold room with a fire out and all your clothes piled on the bed, waiting for a ghost that screams in the night—Oh, not any more, my friend, not any more.

PASCOE. I'm sorry, old man. (*Sits in his chair again.*) If you mention it to Lady Chilworth perhaps she'll change your room to-night.

FELIX. No, no, I cannot stop in this house another night.

(*Exclamation from PASCOE.*)

FELIX. Do not think me lacking in a sentiment of gratitude, but I feel that I should be ruining my health and wasting my time.

PASCOE. But I thought you wanted to study the English?

FELIX. I want to write about them. And what is there to be had out of this place? Not a paragraph! Not a headline! Not a thrill! Nothing happens in this house. I can see them going on like this for years—all calm and cold and proper. I might stay here until I am an old gentleman with white whiskers, and it will still be the same, Mama, Papa, children, butler and red-haired footman, all respectable and in their proper places.

(Enter CECIL door L.)

CECIL. Morning.

PASCOE. Good morning, Cecil.

FELIX. Good morning. Have you slept well? How are you this morning?

CECIL (*shortly*). All right, thanks. (*Going straight to sideboard.*) What is there to eat? (*He looks long and earnestly under the covers of all the dishes, then helps himself to porridge.*)

PASCOE (*to CECIL*). Looks as if it was going to be a good day.

CECIL. Yes.

PASCOE. No frost last night.

CECIL. No.

PASCOE. Almost wish I was following the hounds myself to-day.

CECIL. So do I. (*Coming down. Puts porridge on table.*)

PASCOE. Why, aren't you?

CECIL. No, blacklisted. (*Going L. to get some coffee.*)

PASCOE. That's so. I forgot. Pity.

CECIL (*hopefully*). It may freeze after all.

FELIX (*who has listened with deepening glow at this dialogue*). What train do you think I might take?

PASCOE (*embarrassed*). Well, I've got to leave early, but Sir Everard expects you to stay on, you know.

FELIX (*loudly, for CECIL'S benefit*). My toothache is very bad.

(Enter MISS CHILWORTH door L.)

MISS CHILWORTH (*with a great affectation of cheerfulness*). Good morning, everybody. Cecil, get me a cup of coffee.

(The MEN rise.)

Oh, please sit down! I do hate making trouble.

(FELIX resumes his seat.)

PASCOE (*standing*). What can I get you? (*Puts his plate on sideboard.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*going to sideboard*). Now don't bother about an old woman like me. I prefer waiting on myself.

CECIL (*comes down R. of table*). Other people never give you enough. (*Gives MISS CHILWORTH'S coffee to PASCOE who puts it on the table. CECIL then goes to his place.*)

MISS CHILWORTH (*serving herself*). What a perfect day for the meet, isn't it?

PASCOE. Yes, rather.

MISS CHILWORTH. Let us hope it doesn't snow.

FELIX (*desperate*). Could I have more coffee?

PASCOE. Pass your cup.

MISS CHILWORTH (*puts her plate down next to FELIX. Turning and putting her hand between them for the cup.*) Oh, let me pour it for you. Dear Mary isn't down yet.

FELIX (*risés, goes to R. of PASCOE. Watching CECIL eat, fascinated, to PASCOE aside*). Is it not unnatural how that boy is eating?

PASCOE. Unnatural? An English schoolboy? It would be unnatural if he didn't.

(*FELIX crosses back of PASCOE for his cup.*)

(*Enter LADY CHILWORTH door L. MISS CHILWORTH gives coffee to FELIX.*)

PASCOE and FELIX (*rising*). Good morning, Lady Chilworth.

(*FELIX goes back to his place with his coffee.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, you all down so soon?



(Goes to her place at end of table.)

MISS CHILWORTH. Can I get you a cup of coffee, Mary?

LADY CHILWORTH. Thanks.

(PASCOE goes to sideboard at back. MISS CHILWORTH brings coffee down to LADY CHILWORTH, then takes her own place, No. 2.)

PASCOE. A little bacon, Lady Chilworth?

LADY CHILWORTH. Yes, please.

(PASCOE helps her.)

Looks as if they were going to have a good day again.

PASCOE. We were just saying that. *(Coming down with bacon to LADY CHILWORTH.)*

MISS CHILWORTH. No frost last night.

PASCOE. No!

LADY CHILWORTH. It's quite mild.

PASCOE. Quite.

LADY CHILWORTH. I think we might have a window open in here. I don't know who closed it. *(She looks at CECIL.)* Cecil.

(Reluctantly leaving his plate, he rises and goes to open a window R. FELIX casts a pitious look at PASCOE. Enter BROCK door L.)

BROCK. Good morning.

MISS CHILWORTH and LADY CHILWORTH. Good morning.

PASCOE. Good morning, Brock.

(BROCK goes to service table for coffee.)

FELIX *(rises, goes to BROCK: grimly determined to get it in first this time)*. Splendid weather for hounds, is it not? No frost, very mild, eh, what?

BROCK *(surprised)*. Yes, very.

FELIX *(resuming his place: to himself)*. I said it first.

(BROCK gets egg and bacon from service table.)

LADY CHILWORTH. Everard's feeling seedy this morning. He's having breakfast in bed. His father's quite upset about him.

FELIX. I regret to hear this of your promising eldest son, Lady Chilworth.

BROCK (coming to his place, No. 5—at bottom of table next to CECIL). Has he a temperature?

LADY CHILWORTH (seriously). Oh yes—just on 99.

BROCK (with apparent solemnity). Oh, he must have overdone it yesterday.

FELIX. Too much Cæsar, eh what?

LADY CHILWORTH (seriously). That's what Sir Everard thinks.

(FELIX sneezes.)

BROCK. You've a very bad cold, Monsieur Fourié.

LADY CHILWORTH (surprised: to FELIX). Oh! Is that air too much for you?

(FELIX nods and blows his nose.)

Cecil!

(CECIL, annoyed at having to leave his plate a second time, rises and closes window.)

FELIX (gratefully). Thank you, Lady Chilworth.

LADY CHILWORTH. You can't have caught your cold here, can you?

FELIX (with a pale smile). Oh no. Not all of it. I have also a very bad toothache.

MISS CHILWORTH (rises). Toothache?

FELIX. I fear I must hasten to London to see a dentist.

MISS CHILWORTH. Oh, you won't need to do that. (Going to sideboard.) There's an excellent dentist here in the village.

FELIX (looking at her savagely). Indeed?

(Enter SIR EVERARD door L. *He is rather pale and nervous but self-contained.*)

SIR EVERARD. Good morning.

ALL. Good morning.

PASCOE. How's the invalid?

SIR EVERARD (*at sideboard*). You mean Everard? Seedy. I've just come from him. I shan't hunt to-day.

MISS CHILWORTH (*at sideboard, putting her plate down*). Is his temperature rising?

SIR EVERARD. Yes. If he's not better soon, I shall send for Warner.

(PASCOE moves MISS CHILWORTH'S cup.)

MISS CHILWORTH. I must see if there's anything I can do for the poor dear boy.

(Exit double doors L.)

FELIX (*turning to CECIL who has just helped himself at sideboard again, respectfully*). You have a fine appetite.

(CECIL comes down.)

CECIL (*surprised*). Oh, fairish. It's not up to much this morning. (*Crosses below table, sits in his chair.*)

	Felix	Amy	Pascoe	
Sir Everard				Lady Chilworth
	Brook		Cecil	

(Enter AMY door L., crosses to her mother.)

AMY. Good morning. (*Kisses her mother on the cheek.*) How are you, Monsieur Fourié. (*Goes to sideboard where SIR EVERARD joins her.*)

SIR EVERARD (*anxiously*). Where's Beatrice? Isn't Beatrice down yet?

AMY. She's just finished getting her things to-

gether. She's leaving so early. (*Goes to her place and sits.*)

SIR EVERARD (*jerkily*). Oh—leaving early, is she? (*Goes to his chair.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Tidder tells me she ordered the motor to be here at a quarter to ten.

PASCOE. I'm afraid I must be going early, too.

SIR EVERARD. Nonsense, Pascoe. We won't hear of it. I intend to keep you here with me.

PASCOE. I've promised to take the first train up, Sir Everard.

(*Enter BEATRICE door L. She is dressed for her journey and already wears her motor bonnet, with the veil thrown back. FELIX, PASCOE, BROCK rise, but FELIX and BROCK sit again at once.*)

BEATRICE (*to the room*). Good morning. (*Kissing LADY CHILWORTH.*) Good morning, mother.

LADY CHILWORTH. You're in a great rush to leave us this morning, Bee.

BEATRICE (*looks at PASCOE*). I promised. (*Looks for a seat.*)

AMY. Beside me!

BEATRICE (*taking chair*). Of course, Amy dear.

PASCOE. What can I get you? (*Standing behind her.*)

BEATRICE. Nothing, thanks. I couldn't swallow a mouthful. Just a cup of coffee.

(*BROCK rises, goes up to back to sideboard. FELIX sneezes.*)

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, you have got a bad cold, M. Fourié!

FELIX. I wonder if I could have my overcoat? It's somewhere in the hall.

LADY CHILWORTH. Certainly. Cecil will get it for you. Cecil!

(*Exits CECIL double doors L.*)

SIR EVERARD (*in a bantering manner, but clearly enough to make all at the table listen. Pushes his chair back a little*). Do you know, Bee, you put me in a difficulty by rushing off like this?

BEATRICE. I do, father?

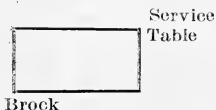
SIR EVERARD. Yes. I've an announcement to make.

BEATRICE. An announcement?

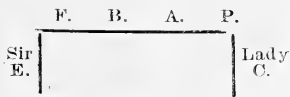
SIR EVERARD. And I want to make it while you're here.

BEATRICE (*wonderingly*). Then you must make it now, father.

SIR EVERARD. Well, if this is the only opportunity, I must. Your sister Amy and John Brock are going to be married.



BEATRICE (*startled*). What! (*Sits rigid as if unable to realize his words.*)



BROCK (*coming down*). What?

SIR EVERARD (*to BROCK*). I tell you I consent to your engagement. What more do you want?

BROCK. Nothing, sir—I—

AMY (*rises*). Father! You don't mean it!

SIR EVERARD (*testily*). I am not in the habit of making statements I don't mean.

(AMY rises, as if with the intention of going to her father, but pauses at the back of BEATRICE'S chair.

PASCOE, alarmed at BEATRICE'S strange look, leans over and puts his hand on her arm. She looks down

at his hand, gives a little shiver, and draws her arm away from him.)

LADY CHILWORTH (*cold and incredulous*). This is the first I've heard of this arrangement, Everard.

SIR EVERARD. You will see it in the *Morning Post* in the course of a day or two, my dear, and then perhaps you'll believe it.

AMY (*clutching the back of BEATRICE'S chair*). But, father, yesterday you said—

SIR EVERARD. Well, you hear what I say to-day. I laid awake all night considering the matter. And it's settled! There, you've my blessing. (*Bringing his hand down on table*.) Good heavens, now you've all got what you want you seem petrified! Have you nothing to say, Bee?

BEATRICE (*realizing what it's going to mean for her, finding her voice with difficulty*). I—I'm glad—I'm glad for them.

(AMY goes to BROCK.)

PASCOE (*coming to the rescue*). It's come as a great surprise, Sir Everard. But every one who knows Amy and who knows Brock can't fail to congratulate them most heartily.

AMY. Oh, father, father! (*She falls on SIR EVERARD'S neck, weeping.*)

SIR EVERARD. Good Lord! What's the matter now?

AMY. I'm so—happy.

SIR EVERARD (*embarrassed to AMY*). You'll ruin my collar. Take her out into the air, Brock, there's a good chap. Go for a walk in the grounds.

BROCK. Yes, yes. (*Drinking AMY gently away.*) Come with me, dear.

AMY (*laughing happily*). Oh, John, it can't be true.

(*Gazing into each other's eyes, they go out window R. together.*)

FELIX (*rises, goes to window, looking after them*).
They will take cold.

PASCOE. No, they won't.

(SIR EVERARD *rises with his plate*.)

FELIX (*comes to R. of SIR EVERARD, turning gratefully to him*). Ah, I am glad to have fallen upon this interesting occasion. In France we give a formal dinner to announce a betrothal. Here you announce it at breakfast!

SIR EVERARD (*crosses below FELIX, takes plate down to table down R.*) Hum! Well, not always!

LADY CHILWORTH (*to BEATRICE jealously*). I suppose you knew about this before, Bee?

BEATRICE (*looking strangely at her mother*). No!
(*Rising and speaking suddenly as if she feared her courage might give out*.) I congratulate you, father.
(*She passes FELIX and goes to her father*.)

(PASCOE *rises*.)

LADY CHILWORTH. My dear, you mean you congratulate Amy.

BEATRICE. No, I congratulate father. (*She holds out her hand*.)

SIR EVERARD. (*Takes it*.)

BEATRICE. It's all right.

(*They stand looking into each other's eyes, as if they had both suddenly discovered each other*. PASCOE, instinctively conscious of the struggle in BEATRICE'S mind, has not taken his eyes from her since SIR EVERARD'S announcement. *Enter TIDDER door L.*)

TIDDER (*to LADY CHILWORTH*). Mrs. Wishaw's motor is at the door, m'lady.

LADY CHILWORTH. Oh, your motor's here, Bee. I'll see if they've put your things in.

(*Exits L.*)

(BEATRICE *withdraws her hand from SIR EVERARD*.)

TIDDER. Shall I get your coat, ma'am?

BEATRICE (*goes to him*). Bring it to me outside, Tidder.

FELIX. Oh, permit me. I will be the one to help you on.

(*Exit L., followed by TIDDER.*)

(SIR EVERARD *sits on chair, picks up paper, reads it.*)

(*Warn curtain.*)

(SIR EVERARD *waits without moving to see what BEATRICE will do. She turns to face PASCOE down L.C. He realizes that she is going to fail him.*)

BEATRICE (*resolutely, holding out her hand to PASCOE*). Good-bye.

PASCOE (*taking her hand and keeping it—blankly*). Good-bye? (*Stammering, trying to appeal to her without letting SIR EVERARD see.*) But—but—I'm going too!

BEATRICE. No!

PASCOE. Won't you give me a lift as far as the station?

BEATRICE. I'm sorry. It's out of my way.

PASCOE. You won't take me—a little way—

(*She looks at her father, who is watching her.*)

BEATRICE. I don't think father intends to let you go yet. He wants to keep you here with your friend. You're hurting my hand, Pascoe.

PASCOE (*relinquishing her hand*). Sorry.

BEATRICE (*crosses R. about to shake hands with SIR EVERARD*). Good-bye, father.

SIR EVERARD (*rises*). I'll put you into your car. (*Crosses above table C. to PASCOE L.C., his hand on PASCOE'S shoulder.*) I'm glad you're staying, Pascoe. (*Crosses above PASCOE and exits double doors L.*)

(*BEATRICE crosses L.*)

PASCOE (*stopping her, by double doors L.*). My

God, Beatrice, you're not going to leave me like this—I can't give you up—I won't!

BEATRICE (*looking up at him*). I love you, Pascoe—nothing can alter that, but father has done the right thing. I've got to stand by him now.

PASCOE. I can't bear it—I can't let you go out of my life like this.

BEATRICE. Not out of my life, dear—we belong to each other. Nothing really can part us—nothing.

PASCOE. Shall I never see you again? Is there no hope?

BEATRICE. You have been so patient. The future—who knows! Will you wait?

PASCOE. Wait, Beatrice? Always! Always! But you must get free—you shall get free.

BEATRICE. Oh, Pascoe—good-bye—

FELIX (*outside*). Mrs. Wishaw!

BEATRICE. Good-bye.

(*Exit L.*)

(PASCOE comes down to c. below table.)

FELIX (*outside*). My dear Mrs. Wishaw—the pleasure of meeting you will be one of the many exquisite memories of this visit.

BEATRICE (*outside*). Good-bye, Monsieur Fourié.

FELIX (*outside*). Good-bye, Mrs. Wishaw, good-bye.

(*Enter FELIX.*)

FELIX (*joining PASCOE down c.*). What a charming woman that Mrs. Wishaw! She might be French!

PASCOE. No! (*Turning and gripping FELIX fiercely by the shoulder.*) She's English—English through and through! (*Slight pause.*) What did I tell you about the English, Felix? Didn't I say that we were muddlers and martyrs? Write this in your book, that there's one sure way of making the English sell their very souls—persuade 'em that they're playing the game!

FELIX. Do not call the English foolish because of that. For when men play the game the Good God does.

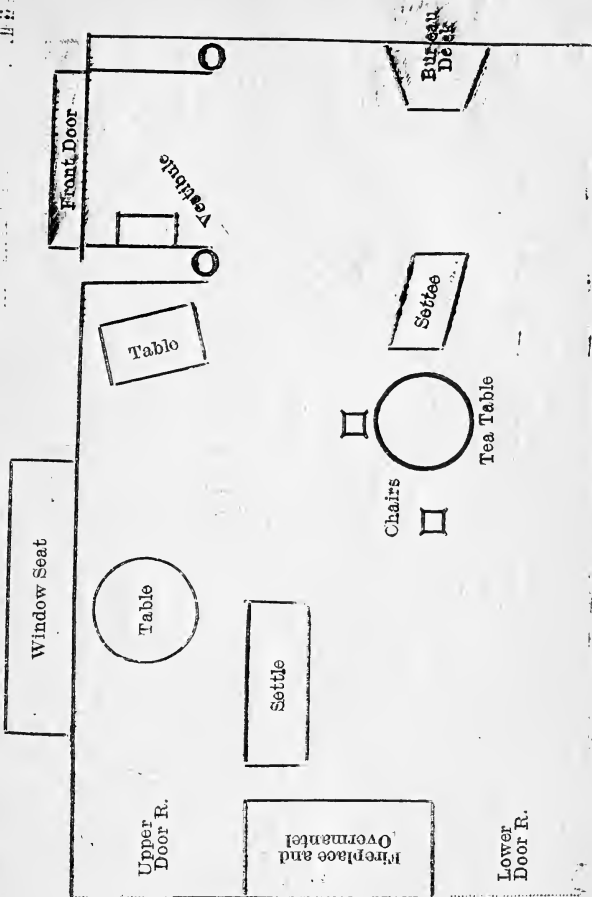
PASCOE. You're right, Felix! And that's my hope!

CURTAIN.

Plays about fifteen minutes.

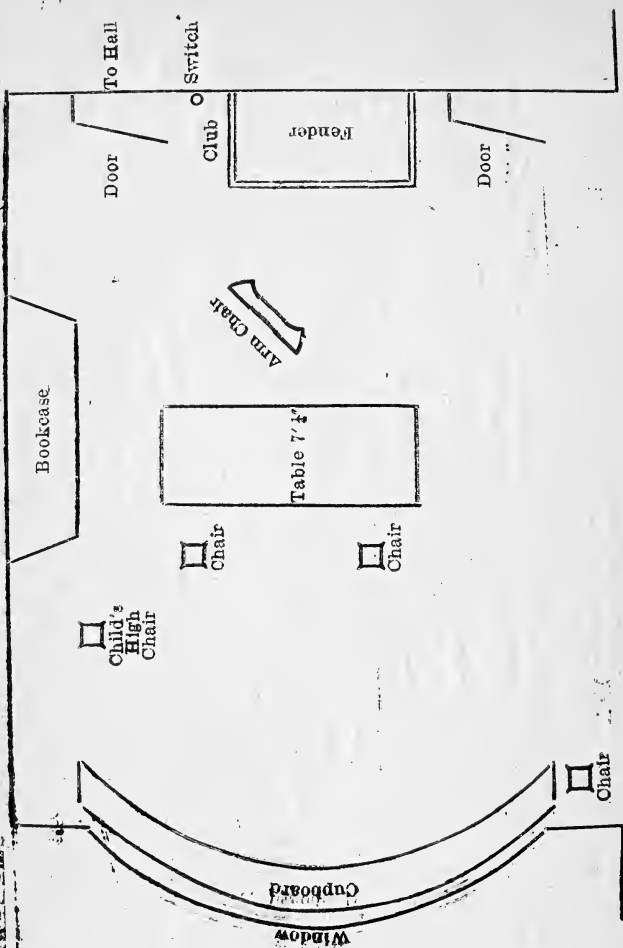
THE SCENE OF ACT I.

Backdrop of Park, Carriage Drive



THE SCENE OF ACT II

THREE

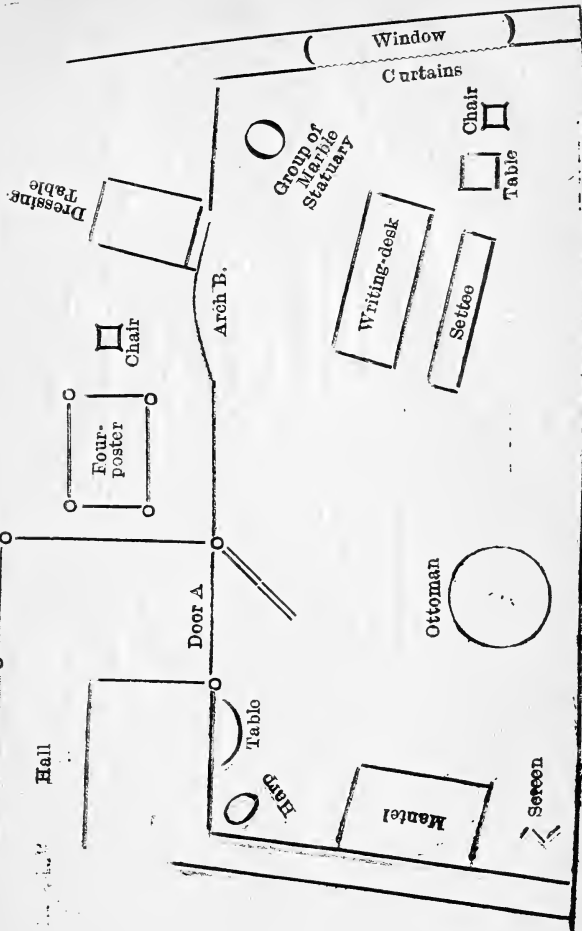


R.

THE SCENE OF ACT III.

Door of Felix Fouquerey's
Bedroom

Hall



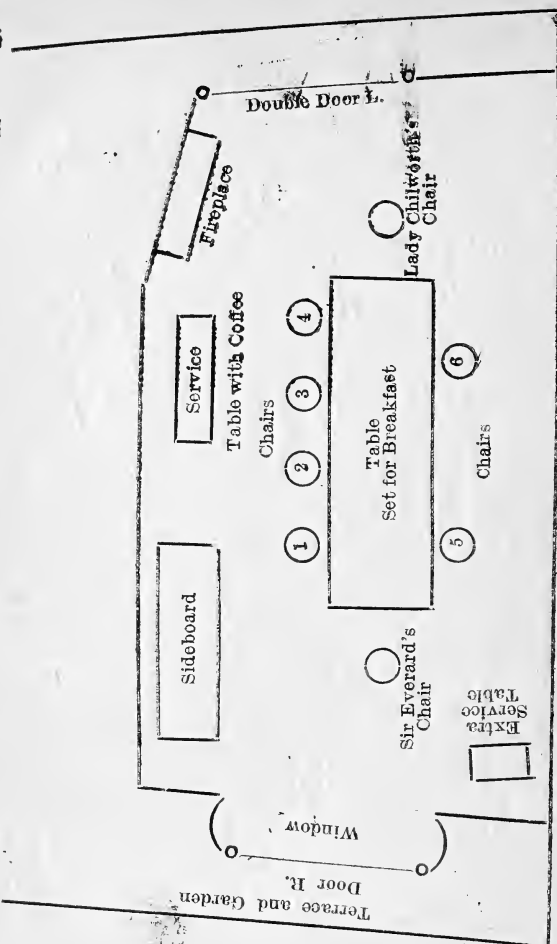
L.

THE SCENE OF ACT IV.

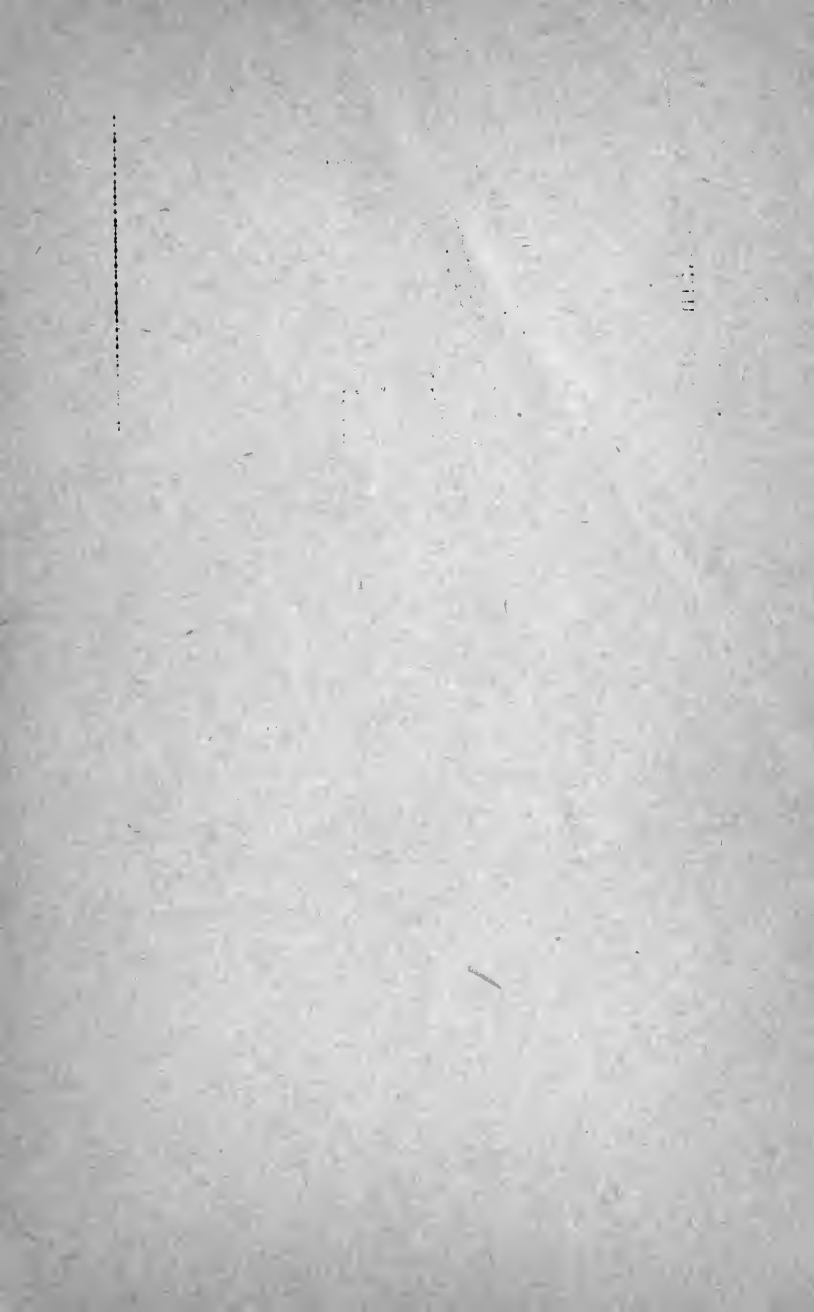
C.

L.

R.



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